



Macdonald of St. Martins



THE
P O E M S
OF
O S S I A N.

VOLUME FIRST.

,



THE *William Macdonald*
POEMS *Jan'y 1. 1795*
OF
O S S I A N.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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TRANSLATED BY
JAMES MACPHERSON, ESQ.



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A

DISSERTATION

CONCERNING THE

ÆRA OF OSSIAN.

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DISSERTATION

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ÆRA OF OSSIAN.

INQUIRIES into the antiquities of nations afford more pleasure than any real advantage to mankind. The ingenious may form systems of history on probabilities and a few facts; but, at a great distance of time, their accounts must be vague and uncertain. The infancy of states and ~~kingdoms~~ is as destitute of great events, as of the means of transmitting them to posterity. The arts of polished life, by which facts alone can be preserved with certainty, are the production of a well-formed community. It is then historians begin to write, and public transactions to be worthy remembrance. The actions of former times are left in obscurity, or magnified by uncertain traditions. Hence it is that we find so much of the marvellous in the origin of every nation; posterity being always ready to believe any thing, however fabulous, that reflects honour on their ancestors.

The Greeks and Romans were remarkable for this weakness. They swallowed the most absurd fables

fables concerning the high antiquities of their respective nations. Good historians, however, rose very early amongst them, and transmitted, with lustre, their great actions to posterity. It is to them that they owe that unrivalled fame they now enjoy, while the great actions of other nations are involved in fables, or lost in obscurity. The Celtic nations afford a striking instance of this kind. They, though once the masters of Europe, from the mouth of the river Oby* in Russia, to Cape Finisterre, the western point of Galicia in Spain, are very little mentioned in history. They trusted their fame to tradition; and the songs of their bards, which, by the vicissitude of human affairs, are long since lost. Their ancient language is the only monument that remains of them; and the traces of it being found in places so widely distant from each other, serves only to shew the extent of their ancient power, but throws very little light on their history.

Of all the Celtic nations, that which possessed old Gaul is the most renowned; not perhaps on account of worth superior to the rest, but for their wars with a people who had historians to transmit the fame of their enemies, as well as their own, to posterity. Britain was first peopled by them, according to the testimony of the best authors †; its situation in respect to Gaul makes the opinion probable; but what puts it beyond all dispute, is, that the same customs and language prevailed among the inhabitants of both in the days of Julius Cæsar ‡.

The colony from Gaul possessed themselves, at first, of that part of Britain which was next
to

* Plin. l. 6. † Cæf. l. 5. Tac. Agric. c. 2.

‡ Cæsar. Pomp. Mel. Tacitus.

to their own country; and spreading northward, by degrees, as they increased in numbers, peopled the whole island. Some adventurers passing over from those parts of Britain that are within sight of Ireland, were the founders of the Irish nation; which is a more probable story than the idle fables of Milesian and Gallician colonies. Diodorus Siculus * mentions it as a thing well known in his time, that the inhabitants of Ireland were originally Britons; and his testimony is unquestionable, when we consider that, for many ages, the language and customs of both nations were the same.

Tacitus was of opinion that the ancient Caledonians were of German extract; but even the ancient Germans themselves were Gauls. The present Germans, properly so called, were not the same with the ancient Celtæ. The manners and customs of the two nations were similar; but their language different. The Germans † are the genuine descendants of the ancient Scandinavians, who crossed, in an early period, the Baltic. The Celtæ ‡, anciently, sent many colonies into Germany, all of whom retained their own laws, language, and customs, till they were dissipated, in the Roman empire; and it is of them, if any colonies came from Germany into Scotland, that the ancient Caledonians were descended.

But whether the Caledonians were a colony of the Celtic Germans, or the same with the Gauls that first possessed themselves of Britain, is a matter of no moment at this distance of time. Whatever their origin was, we find them very
numerous

* Diod. Sic. l. 5.

† Strabo, l. 7.

‡ Cæf. l. 6. Liv. l. 5. Tac. de Mor. Germ.

• A DISSERTATION CONCERNING

numerous in the time of Julius Agricola, which is a presumption that they were long before settled in the country. The form of their government was a mixture of aristocracy and monarchy, as it was in all the countries where the Druids bore the chief sway. This order of men seems to have been formed on the same principles with the Dactyli Idæ and Curetes of the ancients. Their pretended intercourse with heaven, their magic and divination were the same. The knowledge of the Druids in natural causes, and the properties of certain things, the fruit of the experiments of ages, gained them a mighty reputation among the people. The esteem of the populace soon increased into a veneration for the order; which these cunning and ambitious priests took care to improve, to such a degree, that they, in a manner, engrossed the management of civil as well as religious matters. It is generally allowed that they did not abuse this extraordinary power; the preserving their character of sanctity was so essential to their influence, that they never broke out into violence or oppression. The chiefs were allowed to execute the laws, but the legislative power was entirely in the hands of the Druids *. It was by their authority that the tribes were united, in times of the greatest danger, under one head. This temporary king, or Vergobretus †, was chosen by them, and generally laid down his office at the end of the war. These priests enjoyed long this extraordinary privilege among the Celtic nations who lay beyond the pale of the Roman empire. It was in the beginning of the second century that their power among the Caledonians began to decline. The traditions concerning

* Cæf. l. 6.

† Fer-gubreth, *the man no judge*.

cerning Trathal and Corinac, ancestors to Fingal, are full of the particulars of the fall of the Druids: A singular fate, it must be owned, of priests who had once established their superstition.

The continual wars of the Caledonians against the Romans hindered the better sort from initiating themselves, as the custom formerly was, into the order of the Druids. The precepts of their religion were confined to a few, and were not much attended to by a people inured to war. The Vergobretus, or chief magistrate, was chosen without the concurrence of the hierarchy, or continued in his office against their will. Continual power strengthened his interest among the tribes, and enabled him to send down, as hereditary to his posterity, the office he had only received himself by election.

On occasion of a new war against the *King of the world*, as tradition emphatically calls the Roman emperor, the Druids, to vindicate the honour of the order, began to resume their ancient privilege of choosing the Vergobretus. Garmal, the son of Tarno, being deputed by them, came to the grandfather of the celebrated Fingal, who was then Vergobretus, and commanded him, in the name of the whole order, to lay down his office. Upon his refusal, a civil war commenced, which soon ended in almost the total extinction of the religious order of the Druids. A few that remained, retired to the dark recesses of their groves, and the caves they had formerly used for their meditations. It is then we find them in *the circle of stones*, and unheeded by the world. A total disregard for the order, and utter abhorrence of the Druidical rites ensued. Under this cloud of public hate, all that had any knowledge of the religion of the Druids became extinct, and the nation

tion fell into the last degree of ignorance of their rites and ceremonies.

It is no matter of wonder then, that Fingal and his son Ossian disliked the Druids, who were the declared enemies to their succession in the supreme magistracy. It is a singular case, it must be allowed, that there are no traces of religion in the poems ascribed to Ossian; as the poetical compositions of other nations are so closely connected with their mythology. But gods are not necessary, when the poet has genius.—It is hard to account for it to those who are not made acquainted with the manner of the old Scottish bards. That race of men carried their notions of martial honour to an extravagant pitch. Any aid given their heroes in battle was thought to derogate from their fame; and the bards immediately transferred the glory of the action to him who had given that aid.

Had the poet brought down gods, as often as Homer hath done, to assist his heroes, his work had not consisted of eulogiums on men, but of hymns to superior beings. Those who write in the Galic language seldom mention religion in their profane poetry; and when they professedly write of religion, they never mix with their compositions the actions of their heroes. This custom alone, even though the religion of the Druids had not been previously extinguished, may, in some measure, excuse the author's silence concerning the religion of ancient times.

To allege that a nation is void of all religion, would betray ignorance of the history of mankind. The traditions of their fathers, and their own observations on the works of nature, together with that superstition which is inherent in the human frame, have, in all ages, raised in the
minds

mind, of men some idea of a superior being. Hence it is, that in the darkest times, and amongst the most barbarous nations, the very populace themselves had some faint notion at least of a divinity. The Indians, who worship no God, believe that he exists. It would be doing injustice to the author of these poems, to think that he had not opened his conceptions to that primitive and greatest of all truths. But let his religion be what it will, it is certain he has not alluded to Christianity, or any of its rites, in his poems; which ought to fix his opinions, at least, to an era prior to that religion. Conjectures on this subject must supply the place of proof. The persecution begun by Dioclesian, in the year 303, is the most probable time in which the first dawning of Christianity in the north of Britain can be fixed. The humane and mild character of Constantius Chlorus, who commanded then in Britain, induced the persecuted Christians to take refuge under him. Some of them, through a zeal to propagate their tenets, or through fear, went beyond the pale of the Roman empire, and settled among the Caledonians; who were ready to hearken to their doctrines, as the religion of the Druids was exploded long before.

These missionaries, either through choice, or to give more weight to the doctrine they advanced, took possession of the cells and groves of the Druids; and it was from this retired life they had the name of *Culdees**, which, in the language of the country, signified *sequestered persons*. It was with one of the *Culdees* that Ossian, in his extreme old age, is said to have disputed concerning the Christian religion. This dispute, they say, is extant, and is couched in verse, according to the

custom of the times. The extreme ignorance, on the part of Ossian, of the Christian tenets, shews that that religion had only been lately introduced, as it is not easy to conceive how one of the first rank could be totally unacquainted with a religion that had been known for any time in the country. The dispute bears the genuine marks of antiquity. The obsolete phrases and expressions peculiar to the times prove it to be no forgery. If Ossian then lived at the introduction of Christianity, as by all appearance he did, his epoch will be the latter end of the third, and beginning of the fourth century. Tradition here steps in with a kind of proof.

The exploits of Fingal against Caracul *, son of the *king of the world*, are among the first brave actions of his youth. A complete poem, which relates to this subject, is printed in this collection.

In the year 210, the emperor Severus, after returning from his expedition against the Caledonians, at York fell into the tedious illness of which he afterwards died. The Caledonians and Maiaetæ, resuming courage from his indisposition, took arms in order to recover the possessions they had lost. The enraged emperor commanded his army to march into their country, and to destroy it with fire and sword. His orders were but ill executed; for his son, Caracalla, was at the head of the army, and his thoughts were entirely taken up with the hopes of his father's death, and with schemes to supplant his brother Geta.—He scarcely had entered the enemy's country, when news was brought him that Severus was dead.—A sudden peace is patched up

* Carac'huil, *terrible eye*. Carac-'healla, *terrible look*. Carac-challamh, *a sort of upper garment*.

up with the Caledonians, and, as it appears from Dion Cassius, the country they had lost to Severus was restored to them.

The Caracul of Fingal is no other than Caracalla, who, as the son of Severus, the Emperor of Rome, whose dominions were extended almost over the known world, was not without reason called *the Son of the King of the World*. The space of time between 211, the year Severus died, and the beginning of the fourth century, is not so great, but Ossian the son of Fingal might have seen the Christians whom the persecution under Dioclesian had driven beyond the pale of the Roman empire.

In one of the many lamentations on the death of Oscar, a battle which he fought against Caros, king of ships, on the banks of the winding Carun * is mentioned among his great actions. It is more than probable that the Caros mentioned here is the same with the noted usurper Carausius, who assumed the purple in the year 287, and seizing on Britain, defeated the emperor Maximian Herculus, in several naval engagements, which gives propriety to his being called *the king of Ships*. The *winding Carun* is that small river retaining still the name of Carron, and runs in the neighbourhood of Agricola's wall, which Carausius repaired to obstruct the incursions of the Caledonians. Several other passages in tradition allude to the wars of the Romans; but the two just mentioned clearly fix the epocha of Fingal to the third century; and this account agrees exactly with the Irish histories, which place the death of Fingal, the son of Comhal, in the year 283, and that of Oscar, and their own celebrated Cairbre, in the year 296.

Some

* Car-avon, *Winding-river*.

Some people may imagine that the allusions to the Roman history might have been derived by tradition from learned men, more than from ancient poems. This must then have happened at least three ages ago, as these allusions are mentioned often in the compositions of those times.

Every one knows that a cloud of ignorance and barbarism overspread the north of Europe three hundred years ago. The minds of men, addicted to superstition, contracted a narrowness that destroyed genius. Accordingly we find the compositions of those times trivial and puerile to the last degree. But let it be allowed, that, amidst all the untoward circumstances of the age, a genius might arise, it is not easy to determine what could induce him to allude to the Roman times. We find no act to favour any designs which could be entertained by any man who lived in the fifteenth century.

The strongest objection to the antiquity of the poems now given to the public under the name of Ossian, is the improbability of their being handed down by tradition through so many centuries. Ages of barbarism, some will say, could not produce poems abounding with the disinterested and generous sentiments so conspicuous in the compositions of Ossian; and, could these ages produce them, it is impossible but they must be lost, or altogether corrupted in a long succession of barbarous generations.

These objections naturally suggest themselves to men unacquainted with the ancient state of the northern parts of Britain. The bards, who were an inferior order of the Druids, did not share their bad fortune. They were spared by the victorious king, as it was through their means only he could hope for immortality to his fame.

fame. They attended him in the camp, and contributed to establish his power by their songs. His great actions were magnified; and the populace, who had no ability to examine into his character narrowly, were dazzled with his fame in the rhymes of the bards. In the mean time, men assumed sentiments that were rarely to be met with in an age of barbarism. The bards, who were originally the disciples of the Druids, had their minds opened, and their ideas enlarged, by being initiated in the learning of that celebrated order. They could form a perfect hero in their own minds, and ascribe that character to their prince. The inferior chiefs made this ideal character the model of their conduct, and by degrees brought their minds to that generous spirit which breathes in all the poetry of the times. The prince, flattered by his bards, and rivalled by his own heroes, who imitated his character as described in the eulogies of his poets, endeavoured to excel his people in merit, as he was above them in station. This emulation continuing, formed at last the general character of the nation, happily compounded of what is noble in barbarity, and virtuous and generous in a polished people.

When virtue in peace, and bravery in war, are the characteristics of a nation, their actions become interesting, and their fame worthy of immortality. A generous spirit is warmed with noble actions, and becomes ambitious of perpetuating them. This is the true source of that divine inspiration, to which the poets of all ages pretended. When they found their themes inadequate to the warmth of their imaginations, they varnished them over with fables, supplied by their own fancy, or furnished by absurd traditions.

ditions. These fables, however ridiculous, had their abettors; posterity either implicitly believed them, or, through a vanity natural to mankind, pretended that they did. They loved to place the founders of their families in the days of fable, when poetry, without the fear of contradiction, could give what characters she pleased of her heroes. It is to this vanity that we owe the preservation of what remain of the more ancient poems. Their poetical merit made their heroes famous in a country where heroism was much esteemed and admired. The posterity of those heroes, or those who pretended to be descended from them, heard with pleasure the eulogiums of their ancestors; bards were employed to repeat the poems, and to record the connection of their patrons with chiefs so renowned. Every chief, in process of time, had a bard in his family, and the office became at last hereditary. By the succession of these bards, the poems concerning the ancestors of the family were handed down from generation to generation; they were repeated to the whole clan on solemn occasions, and always alluded to in the new compositions of the bards. This custom came down to near our own times; and, after the bards were discontinued, a great number in a clan retained by memory, or committed to writing, their compositions, and founded the antiquity of their families on the authority of their poems.

The use of letters was not known in the north of Europe till long after the institution of the bards: the records of the families of their patrons, their own, and more ancient poems, were handed down by tradition. Their poetical compositions were admirably contrived for that purpose. They were adapted to music; and the
most

most perfect harmony was observed. Each verse was so connected with those which preceded or followed it, that if one line had been remembered in a stanza, it was almost impossible to forget the rest. The cadences followed in so natural a gradation, and the words were so adapted to the common turn of the voice, after it is raised to a certain key, that it was almost impossible, from a similarity of sound, to substitute one word for another. This excellence is peculiar to the Celtic tongue, and is perhaps to be met with in no other language. Nor does this choice of words clog the sense, or weaken the expression. The numerous flexions of consonants, and variation in declension, make the language very copious.

The descendants of the Celtæ, who inhabited Britain and its isles, were not singular in this method of preserving the most precious monuments of their nation. The ancient laws of the Greeks were couched in verse, and handed down by tradition. The Spartans, through a long habit, became so fond of this custom, that they would never allow their laws to be committed to writing. The actions of great men, and the eulogium of kings and heroes, were preserved in the same manner. All the historical monuments of the old Germans were comprehended in their ancient songs *; which were either hymns to their gods, or elegies in praise of their heroes; and were intended to perpetuate the great events in their nation, which were carefully interwoven with them. This species of composition was not committed to writing, but delivered by oral tradition †. The care they took to have the poems taught to their children, the uninterrupted

* Tacitus de Mor. Germ.

† *Abbe de la Bleterie Remarques sur la Germanie.*

rupted custom of repeating them upon certain occasions, and the happy measure of the verse, serving to preserve them for a long time uncorrupted: This oral chronicle of the Germans was not forgot in the eighth century; and it probably would have remained to this day, had not learning, which thinks every thing that is not committed to writing fabulous, been introduced. It was from poetical traditions that Garcillasso composed his account of the Yncas of Peru. The Peruvians had lost all other monuments of their history; and it was from ancient poems which his mother, a princess of the blood of the Yncas, taught him in his youth, that he collected the materials of his history. If other nations then, that had been often overrun by enemies, and had sent abroad and received colonies, could for many ages preserve, by oral tradition, their laws and histories uncorrupted, it is much more probable that the ancient Scots, a people so free of intermixture with foreigners, and so strongly attached to the memory of their ancestors, had the works of their bards handed down with great purity.

What is advanced, in this short Dissertation, it must be confessed, is mere conjecture. Beyond the reach of records, is settled a gloom, which no ingenuity can penetrate. The manners described in these poems suit the ancient Celtic times, and no other period, that is known in history. We must, therefore, place the heroes far back in antiquity; and it matters little who were their contemporaries in other parts of the world. If we have placed Fingal in his proper period, we do honour to the manners of barbarous times. He exercised every manly virtue in Caledonia, while Heliogabulus disgraced human nature at Rome.

FINGAL:

AN

ANCIENT EPIC POEM.

IN SIX BOOKS.

BOOK I.

VOL. I.

A

ARGUMENT TO BOOK I.

Cuthullin (general of the Irish tribes, in the minority of Cormac, king of Ireland) sitting alone beneath a tree, at the gate of Tura, a castle of Ulster, (the other chiefs having gone on a hunting party to Cromla, a neighbouring hill), is informed of the landing of Swaran, king of Lochlin, by Moran, the son of Fithil, one of his scouts. He convenes the chiefs; a council is held, and disputes run high about giving battle to the enemy. Connal, the petty king of Togorma, and an intimate friend of Cuthullin, was for retreating, till Fingal, king of those Caledonians who inhabited the north-west coast of Scotland, whose aid had been previously solicited, should arrive; but Calmar, the son of Matha, lord of Lara, a country in Connaught, was for engaging the enemy immediately. Cuthullin, of himself willing to fight, went into the opinion of Calmar. Marching towards the enemy, he missed three of his bravest heroes, Fergus, Duchomar, and Cathba. Fergus arriving, tells Cuthullin of the death of the two other chiefs, which introduces the affecting episode of Morna, the daughter of Cormac. The army of Cuthullin is descried at a distance by Swaran, who sent the son of Arno to observe the motions of the enemy, while he himself ranged his forces in order of battle. The son of Arno returning to Swaran, describes to him Cuthullin's chariot, and the terrible appearance of that hero. The armies engage, but night coming on, leaves the victory undecided. Cuthullin, according to the hospitality of the times, sends to Swaran a formal invitation to a feast, by his bard Carril, the son of Kinfena. Swaran refuses to come. Carril relates to Cuthullin the story of Grudar and Brassolis. A party, by Connal's advice, is sent to observe the enemy; which closes the action of the first day.

BOOK FIRST.

F I N G A L:

A N

ANCIENT EPIC POEM.

CUTHULLIN * sat by Tura's wall; by the tree
of the rustling sound. His spear leaned a-
gainst a rock. His shield lay on grass, by his
side. Amid his thoughts of mighty Carbar †,

A 2

a

* Cuthullin the son of Semo, and grandson to Caithbat, a Druid celebrated in tradition for his wisdom and valour. Cuthullin, when very young, married Bragela the daughter of Sorglan, and passing over into Ireland, lived for some time with Connal, grandson by a daughter to Congal the petty king of Ulster. His wisdom and valour in a short time gained him such reputation, that, in the minority of Cormac, the supreme king of Ireland, he was chosen guardian to the young king, and sole manager of the war against Swaran king of Lochlin. After a series of great actions, he was killed in battle somewhere in Connaught, in the twenty-seventh year of his age. He was so remarkable for his strength, that, to describe a strong man, it has passed into a proverb, "He has the strength of Cuthullin." They show the remains of his palace at Dunscaith, in the isle of Sky; and a stone to which he bound his dog Luath goes still by his name.

† Cairbar, or Cairbre, signifies a strong man.

a hero slain by the chief in war ; the scout * of ocean comes, Moran † the son of Fithil !

“ Arise,” says the youth, “ Cuthullin, arise, I see the ships of the north ! Many, chief of men, are the foe. Many the heroes of the sea-borne Swaran !” “ Moran !” replied the blue-eyed chief, “ thou ever tremblest, son of Fithil ! Thy fears have increased the foe. It is Fingal, king ‡ of desarts, with aid to green Erin of streams.” “ I beheld their chief,” says Moran, “ tall as a glittering rock. His spear is a blasted pine. His shield the rising moon ! He sat on the shore ! like a cloud of mist on the silent hill ! Many, chief of heroes ! I said, many are our hands of war. Well art thou named, the mighty Man : but many mighty men are seen from Tura’s windy walls,”

“ He spoke, like a wave on a rock, who in this land appears like me ? Heroes stand not in my

* Cuthullin having previous intelligence of the invasion intended by Swaran, sent scouts all over the coast of Ullin or Ulster, to give early notice of the first appearance of the enemy, at the same time that he sent Munan, the son of Stirmal, to implore the assistance of Fingal. He himself collected the flower of the Irish youth to Tura, a castle on the coast, to stop the progress of the enemy till Fingal should arrive from Scotland. We may conclude, from Cuthullin’s applying so early for foreign aid, that the Irish were not then so numerous as they have since been ; which is a great presumption against the high antiquities of that people. We have the testimony of Tacitus, that one legion only was thought sufficient, in the time of Agricola, to reduce the whole island under the Roman yoke ; which would not probably have been the case had the island been inhabited for any number of centuries before.

† Moran signifies *many* ; and Fithil, or rather Fili, an *inferior bard*.

‡ Fingal the son of Comhal, and Morna the daughter of Thaddu. His grandfather was Trathal, and great grandfather Trenmor, both of whom are often mentioned in the poem.

my presence : They fall to earth from my hand. Who can meet Swaran in fight ? Who but Fingal, king of Selma of storms ? Once we wrestled on Malmor * ; our heels overturned the woods. Rocks fell from their place ; rivulets, changing their course, fled murmuring from our side. Three days we renewed the strife ; heroes stood at a distance and trembled. On the fourth, Fingal says, that the king of the ocean fell ! but Swaran says, he stood ! Let dark Cuthullin yield to him, that is strong as the storms of his land !”

“No !” replied the blue-eyed chief, “I never yield to mortal man ! Dark Cuthullin shall be great or dead ! Go, son of Fithil, take my spear. Strike the sounding shield of Semo †. It hangs at Tura’s rustling gate. The sound of peace is not its voice ! My heroes shall hear and obey.” He went. He struck the bossy shield. The hills, the rocks reply. The sound spreads along the wood : deer start by the lake of roes. Currach ‡ leaps from the sounding rock ; and Connal of the bloody spear ! Cru-gal’s § breast of snow beats high. The son of Favi leaves the dark-brown hind. It is the shield of war, said Ronnar ! the spear of Cuthullin, said Lugar ! son of the sea put on thy arms ! Calmar lift thy sounding steel ! Puno ! dreadful hero, arise ! Cairbar from thy red tree of Cromla ! Bend thy knee, O Eth ! descend from the streams
of

* Meal-mor, a great bill,

† Cabait, or rather Cathbait, grandfather to the hero, was so remarkable for his valour, that his shield was made use of to alarm his posterity to the battles of the family. We find Fingal making the same use of his own shield in the 4th book. A horn was the most common instrument to call the army together.

‡ Cu-raoch signifies the madness of battle.

§ Cruth-geal, fair-complexioned.

of Lena. Ca-olt ! stretch thy side as thou movest along the whistling heath of Mora : thy side that is white as the foam of the troubled sea, when the dark winds pour it on rocky Cuthon*.

Now I behold the chiefs, in the pride of their former deeds ! their souls are kindled at the battles of old ; at the actions of other times. Their eyes are flames of fire. They roll in search of the foes of the land. Their mighty hands are on their swords. Lightning pours from their sides of steel. They come like streams from the mountains ; each rushes roaring from his hill. Bright are the chiefs of battle, in the armour of their fathers. Gloomy and dark their heroes follow, like the gathering of the rainy clouds behind the red meteors of heaven. The sounds of crashing arms ascend. The grey dogs howl between. Unequal bursts the song of battle. Rocking Cromla† echoes round. On Lena's dusky heath they stand, like mist that shades the hills of autumn : when broken and dark it settles high, and lifts its head to heaven !

“ Hail,” said Cuthullin, “ sons of the narrow vales ! hail, hunters of the deer ! Another sport is drawing near : It is like the dark rolling of that wave on the coast ! Or shall we fight, ye sons of war ! or yield green Erin‡ to Lochlin ! O Connal§ speak, thou first of men ! thou breaker

* Cu-thon, the mournful sound of waves.

† Crom-leach signified a place of worship among the Druids. It is here the proper name of a hill on the coast of Ullin or Ulster.

‡ Ireland, so called from a colony that settled there called Falans. Inis-fail, the island of the Fail or Falans.

§ Connal, the friend of Cuthullin, was the son of Caith-bait prince of the Tongorma, or the *island of blue waves*, probably one of the Hebrides. His mother was Fioncoma the daughter.

breaker of the shields ! thou hast often fought with Lochlin : Wilt thou lift thy father's spear ?

“ Cuthullin !” calm the chief replied, “ the spear of Connal is keen. It delights to shine in battle ; to mix with the blood of thousands. But tho' my hand is bent on fight, my heart is for the peace of Erin *. Behold, thou first in Cormac's war, the sable fleet of Swaran. His masts are many on our coast, like reeds in the lake of Lego. His ships are forests clothed with mist, when the trees yield by turns to the squally wind. Many are his chiefs in battle. Connal is for peace ! Fingal would shun his arm, the first of mortal men ! Eingal, who scatters the mighty, as stormy winds the heath ; when streams roar thro' echoing Cona : and night settles with all her clouds on the hill !

“ Fly, thou man of peace,” said Calmar †, “ fly,” said the son of Matha ; “ go, Connal, to thy silent hills, where the spear never brightens in war ! Pursue the dark-brown deer of Cromla : stop with thine arrows the bounding roes of Lena. But, blue-eyed son of Semo, Cuthullin, ruler of the field, scatter thou the sons of Lochlin ‡ ; roar thro' the ranks of their pride. Let no vessel of the kingdom of Snow

A 4

bound

daughter of Congal. He had a son by Foba of Conacharnesslar, who was afterwards petty king of Ulster. For his services in the war against Swaran he had lands conferred on him, which, from his name, were called Tir-chonnail, or Tir-connel, *i. e.* the land of Connal.

* Erin, a name of Ireland ; from *ear*, or *iar*, West, and *in* an island. This name was not always confined to Ireland, for there is the highest probability that the *Ierne* of the ancients was Britain to the North of the Forth. For Ierne is said to be to the north of Britain, which could not be meant of Ireland. STRABO, l. 2. & 4. CASAUB. l. 1.

† Calm-er, a strong man.

‡ The Galic name of Scandinavia in general.

bound on the dark-rolling waves of Inis-tore *. Rise, ye dark winds of Erin rise ! roar whirlwinds of Lara of hinds ! Amid the tempest let me die, torn, in a cloud, by angry ghosts of men ; amid the tempest let Calmar die, if ever chace was sport for him, so much as the battle of shields !”

“ Calmar !” Connal flow replied, “ I never fled, young son of Matha ! I was swift with my friends in fight ; but small is the fame of Connal ! The battle was won in my presence ; the valiant overcame ! But, son of Semo, hear my voice, regard the ancient throne of Cormac. Give wealth and half the land for peace, till Fingal shall arrive on our coast. Or, if war be thy choice, I lift the sword and spear. My joy shall be in the midst of thousands ; my soul shall lighten through the gloom of the fight !”

“ To me,” Cuthullin replies, “ pleasant is the noise of arms ! pleasant as the thunder of heaven, before the shower of spring ! But gather all the shining tribes that I may view the sons of war ! Let them pass along the heath, bright as the sun-shine before a storm ; when the west wind collects the clouds, and Morven echoes over all her oaks ! But where are my friends in battle ? The supporters of my arm in danger ? Where art thou, white-bosom’d Cathba ? Where is that cloud, in war, Duchomar † ? Hast thou left me, O Fergus ‡ ! in the day of the storm ! Fergus, first in our joy at the feast ! son of Rossa ! arm of death ! comest thou like a roe from Malmor ? Like a hart from thy echoing hills ? Hail thou son of Rossa ! what shades the soul of war ?”

* The Orkney islands.

† Dubhchomar, a black, well-made man.

‡ Fear-guth, the man of the world ; or a commander of an army.

“Four stones*,” replied the chief, “rise on the grave of Cathba. These hands have laid in earth Duchomar, that cloud in war! Cathba, son of Torman! thou wert a sun-beam in Erin. And thou, O valiant Duchomar! a mist of the marshy Lano; when it moves on the plains of autumn, bearing the death of thousands along, Morna! fairest of maids! calm is thy sleep in the cave of the rock! thou hast fallen in darkness, like a star, that shoots across the desert; when the traveller is alone, and mourns the transient beam!”

“Say,” said Semo’s blue-eyed son, “say how fell the chiefs of Erin? Fell they by the sons of Lochlin striving in the battle of heroes? Or what confines the strong in arms to the dark and narrow house?”

“Cathba,” replied the hero, “fell by the sword of Duchomar at the oak of the noisy streams. Duchomar came to Tura’s cave; he spoke to the lovely Morna. Morna†, fairest among women, lovely daughter of strong armed Cormac. Why in the circle of stones, in the cave of the rock alone? The stream murmurs long. The old tree groans in the wind. The lake is troubled before thee; dark are the clouds of the sky! But thou art snow on the heath: thy hair is the mist of Cromla; when it curls on the

A 5

hill;

* This passage alludes to the manner of burial among the ancient Scots. They opened a grave six or eight feet deep: the bottom was lined with fine clay: and on this they laid the body of the deceased, and if a warrior, his sword, and the heads of twelve arrows by his side. Above they laid another stratum of clay, in which they placed the horn of a deer, the symbol of hunting. The whole was covered with a fine mold, and four stones placed on each end to mark the extent of the grave. These are the four stones alluded to here.

† Muirne, or Morna, a woman beloved by all.

hill ; when it shines to the beam of the west !
Thy breasts are two smooth rocks seen from
Branno of streams. Thy arms, like two white
pillars, in the halls of the great Fingal."

"From whence," the fair-haired maid replied, "from whence, Duchomar, most gloomy of men ? Dark are thy brows and terrible ! Red are thy rolling eyes ! Does Swaran appear on the sea ? What of the foe, Duchomar ?" "From the hill I return, O Morna, from the hill of the dark-brown hinds.. Three have I slain with my bended yew. Three with my long bounding dogs of the chace. Lovely daughter of Cormac, I love thee as my soul ! I have slain one stately deer for thee. High was his branchy head ; and fleet his feet of wind." "Duchomar !" calm the maid replied, "I love thee not, thou gloomy man ! hard is thy heart of rock ; dark is thy terrible brow. But Cathba, young son of Torman *, thou art the love of Morna. Thou art a sun-beam, in the day of the gloomy storm. Sawest thou the son of Torman, lovely on the hill of his hinds ? Here the daughter of Cormac waits the coming of Cathba !"

"Long shall Morna wait," Duchomar said, "long shall Morna wait for Cathba ! Behold this sword unsheathed ! Here wanders the blood of Cathba. Long shall Morna wait. He fell by the stream of Branno ! On Croma I will raise his tomb, daughter of blue-shielded Cormac ! Turn on Duchomar thine eyes ; his arm is strong as a storm." "Is the son of Torman fallen ?" said the wildly bursting voice of the maid. "Is he fallen on his echoing hills, the youth

* Torman, *thunder*. This is the true origin of the Jupiter Teramis of the ancients.

youth with the breast of snow ? The first in the chace of hinds ? The foe of the strangers of ocean ? Thou art dark * to me, Duchomar, cruel is thine arm to Morna ! Give me that sword my foe ! I love the wandering blood of Cathba !”

He gave the sword to her tears. She pierced his manly breast ! He fell, like the bank of a mountain-stream, and stretching forth his hand, he spoke : “ Daughter of blue-shielded Cormac ! Thou hast slain me in youth ! The sword is cold in my breast : Morna, I feel it cold. Give me to Moina † the maid. Duchomar was the dream of her night ! She will raise my tomb ; the hunter shall raise my fame. But draw the sword from my breast. Morna, the steel is cold ! “ She came, in all her tears, she came ; she drew the sword from his breast. He pierced her white side ! He spread her fair locks on the ground ! Her bursting blood sounds from her side : her white arm is stained with red. Rolling in death she lay. The cave re-echoed to her sighs.”

“ Peace,” said Cuthullin, “ to the souls of the heroes ! their deeds were great in fight. Let them ride around ‡ me on clouds. Let them shew their features of war. My soul shall then be firm in danger ; mine arm like the thunder of heaven ; But be thou on a moon-beam, O Morna ! near the window of my rest ; when my thoughts are of peace ; when the din of arms is past. Gather the strength of the tribes ! Move
to

* She alludes to his name, *the dark man*.

† Moina, *soft in temper and person*.

‡ It was the opinion then, as indeed it is to this day, of some of the Highlanders, that the souls of the deceased hovered round their living friends ; and sometimes appeared to them when they were about to enter on any great undertaking.

to the wars of Erin ! Attend the car of my battles ! Rejoice in the noise of my course ! Place three spears by my side : follow the bounding of my steeds ! That my soul may be strong in my friends, when battle darkens round the beams of my steel !”

As rushes a stream of foam from the dark shady deep of Cromla ; when the thunder is travelling above, and dark-brown night sits on half the hill. Through the breaches of the tempest look forth the dim faces of ghosts. So fierce, so vast, so terrible rushed on the sons of Erin. The chief, like a whale of ocean, whom all his billows pursue, poured valour forth as a stream, rolling his might along the shore. The sons of Lochlin heard the noise, as the sound of a winter storm. Swaran struck his bossy shield : he called the son of Arno, “ What murmur rolls along the hill, like the gathered flies of the eve ? The sons of Erin descend, or rustling winds roar in the distant wood ! Such is the noise of Gormal, before the white tops of my waves arise. O son of Arno, ascend the hill ; view the dark face of the Heath !”

He went. He, trembling, swift returned. His eyes rolled wildly round. His heart beat high against his side. His words were faltering, broken, slow. “ Arise, son of ocean, arise, chief of the dark-brown shields ! I see the dark, the mountain-stream of battle ! The deep-moving strength of the sons of Erin ! The car, the car of war comes on, like the flame of death ; the rapid car of Cuthullin, the noble son of Semo ! It bends behind like a wave near a rock ; like the sun-streaked mist of the heath. Its sides are embossed with stones, and sparkle like the sea round the boat of night. Of polished yew is its beam ;

beam ; its seat of the smoothest bone. The sides are replenished with spears ; the bottom is the footstool of heroes ! Before the right side of the car is seen the snorting horse ! The high-maned, broad-breasted, proud, wide-leaping, strong steed of the hill. Loud and resounding is his hoof ; the spreading of his mane above is like a stream of smoke on a ridge of rocks. Bright are the sides of the steed ! his name is Sulin-Sifadda !”

“ Before the left side of the car is seen the snorting horse ! The thin-manned, high-headed, strong-hoofed, fleet, bounding son of the hill : his name is Dufronnel, among the stormy sons of the sword ! A thousand thongs bind the car on high. Hard polished bits shine in a wreath of foam. Thin thongs, bright-studded with gems, bend on the stately necks of the steeds. The steeds that like wreaths of mist fly over the streamy vales ! The wildness of deer is in their course, the strength of eagles descending on the prey. Their noise is like the blast of winter, on the sides of the snow-headed Gormal.

“ Within the car is seen the chief ; the strong-armed son of the sword. The hero’s name is Cuthullin, son of Semo king of shells. His red cheek is like my polished yew. The look of his blue-rolling eye is wide, beneath the dark arch of his brow. His hair flies from his head like a flame, as bending forward he wields the spear. Fly, king of ocean, fly ! He comes, like a storm, along the streamy vale !”

“ When did I fly ? ” replied the king. “ When fled Swaran from the battle of spears ? When did I shrink from danger, chief of the little soul ? I met the storm of Gormal, when the foam of my waves beat high. I met the storm of the clouds ; shall Swaran fly from a hero ? Were
Fingal

Fingal himself before me, my soul should not darken with fear. Arise to battle, my thousands ? pour round me like the echoing main. Gather round the bright steel of your king ; strong as the rocks of my land ; that meet the storm with joy, and stretch their dark pines to the wind !”

Like autum’s dark storms pouring from two echoing hills, towards each other approached the heroes. Like two deep streams from high rocks meeting, mixing, roaring on the plain ; loud, rough and dark in battle meet Lochlin and Inis-fail. Chief mixes his strokes with chief, and man with man ; steel, clanging, sounds on steel. Helmets are cleft on high. Blood bursts and smokes around. Strings murmur on the polished yews. Darts rush along the sky. Spears fall like the circles of light, which gild the face of night. As the noise of the troubled ocean, when roll the waves on high. As the last peal of thunder in heaven, such is the din of war ! Though Cormac’s hundred bards were there, to give the fight to song ; feeble was the voice of a hundred bards to send the deaths to future times ! For many were the deaths of heroes ; while poured the blood of the brave !

Mourn, ye sons of song, mourn the death of the noble Sithallin *. Let the sighs of Fiona rise, on the lone plains of her lovely Ardan. They fell, like two hinds of the desert, by the hands of the mighty Swaran ; when, in the midst of thousands, he roared ; like the shrill spirit of a storm. He sits dim, on the clouds of the north, and enjoys the death of the mariner.
Nor

* Sithallin signifies a *handsome man* ; Fiona, a *fair maid* ; and Ardan, *pride*.

Nor slept thy hand by thy side, chief of the isle of mist * ! many were the deaths of thine arm, Cuthullin, thou son of Semo ! His sword was like the beam of heaven when it pierces the fons of the vale ; when the people are blasted and fall, and all the hills are burning around. Duffronnal † snorted over the bodies of heroes. Sithfadda ‡ bathed his hoof in blood. The battle lay behind them, as groves overturned on the desert of Cromla ; when the blast has passed the heath, laden with the spirits of night !

Weep on the rocks of roaring winds, O maid of Inistore § ! Bend thy fair head over the waves, thou lovelier than the ghost of the hills ; when it moves, in a sun beam, at noon, over the silence of Morven ! He is fallen ! thy youth is low ! pale beneath the sword of Cuthullin ! No more shall valour raise thy love to match the blood of kings. Trenar, graceful Trenar, died, O maid of Inistore ! His grey dogs are howling at home ; they see his passing ghost. His bow is in the hall unstrung. No sound is in the hill of his hinds !

As

* The Isle of Sky ; not improperly called the *isle of mist*, as its high hills, which catch the clouds from the western ocean, occasion almost continual rains.

† One of Cuthullin's horses. Dubhstron gheal.

‡ Sith-fadda, *i. e.* a long stride.

§ The maid of Inistore was the daughter of Gorlo king of Inistore or Orkney island. Trenar was brother to the king of Iniscon, supposed to be one of the islands of Shetland. The Orkneys and Shetland were at that time subject to the king of Lochlin. We find that the dogs of Trenar are sensible at home of the death of their master the very instant he is killed. It was the opinion of the times, that the souls of heroes went immediately after death to the hills of their country, and the scenes they frequented the most happy time of their life. It was thought too that dogs and horses saw the ghosts of the deceased.

As roll a thousand waves to the rocks, so Swaran's host come on. As meets a rock a thousand waves, so Erin met Swaran of spears. Death raises all his voices around, and mixes with the sounds of shields. Each hero is a pillar of darkness; the sword a beam of fire in his hand. The field echoes from wing to wing, as a hundred hammers; that rise, by turns on the red son of the furnace. Who are these on Lena's heath, these so gloomy and dark? Who are these like two clouds, and their swords like lightning above them? The little hills are troubled around; the rocks tremble with all their moss. Who is it but Ocean's son and the car-borne chief of Erin? Many are the anxious eyes of their friends, as they see them dim on the heath. But night conceals the chiefs in clouds, and ends the dreadful fight!

It was on Cromla's shaggy side that Dorglas had placed the deer*; the early fortune of the chase before the heroes left the hill. A hundred youths collect the heath; ten warriors wake the fire; three hundred choose the polish'd stones. The feast is smoking wide! Cuthullin, chief of Erin's war, resumed his mighty soul. He stood upon his beamy spear, and spoke to the son of songs: to Carril of other times, the grey-haired son of Kinfena†. "Is this feast spread for me alone

* The ancient manner of preparing feasts after hunting is handed down by tradition. A pit, lined with smooth stones, was made; and near it stood a heap of smooth flat stones of the flint kind. The stones, as well as the pit, were properly heated with heath. Then they laid some venison in the bottom, and a stratum of the stones above it; and thus they did alternately till the pit was full. The whole was covered over with heath to confine the steam. Whether this is probable I cannot say; but some pits are shewn, which the vulgar say were used in that manner.

† Cean-seana, i. e. the head of the people.

alone, and the king of Lochlin, on Erin's shore ; far from the deer of his hills, and sounding halls of his feasts ? Rise, Carril of other times ; carry my words to Swaran. Tell him from the roaring of waters, that Cuthullin gives his feast. Here let him listen to the sound of my groves, amidst the clouds of night. For cold and bleak the blustering winds rush over the foam of his seas. Here let him praise the trembling harp, and hear the songs of heroes !”

Old Carril went, with softest voice. He called the king of dark brown shields ! “ Rise from the skins of thy chace, rise, Swaran king of groves ! Cuthullin gives the joy of shells. Partake the feast of Erin's blue-eyed chief !” He answered like the fullen sound of Cromla before a storm. “ Though all thy daughters, Inis-fail ! should stretch their arms of snow ; should raise the heavings of their breasts, and softly roll their eyes of love ; yet, fixed as Lochlin's thousand rocks, here Swaran should remain ; till morn, with the young beams of the east, shall light me to the death of Cuthullin. Pleasant to my ear is Lochlin's wind ! it rushes over my seas ! It speaks aloft in all my shrouds, and brings my green forests to my mind : The green forests of Gormal, which often echoed to my winds, when my spear was red in the chace of the boar. Let dark Cuthullin yield to me the ancient throne of Cormac ; or Erin's torrents shall shew from their hills the red foam of the blood of his pride !”

“ Sad is the sound of Swaran's voice,” said Carril of other times ! “ Sad to himself alone,” said the blue-eyed son of Semo. “ But, Carril raise the voice on high ; tell the deeds of other times. Send thou the night away in song ; and give the joy of grief. For many heroes and maids of
of

of love, have moved on Inis-fail : And lovely are the songs of woe that are heard in Albion's rocks ; when the noise of the chase is past, and the streams of Cona answer to the voice of Ossian *."

"In other days †," Carril replies, "came the sons of Ocean to Erin ! A thousand vessels bound-ed on waves to Ullin's lovely plains. The sons of Inis-fail arose, to meet the race of dark-brown shields. Cairbar, first of men, was there, and Grudar, stately youth ! Long had they strove for the spotted bull, that lowed on Golbun's ‡ echoing heath. Each claimed him as his own. Death was often at the point of their steel ! Side by side the heroes fought ; the strangers of the Ocean fled. Whose name was fairer on the hill, than the name of Gaiabar and Grudar ! But ah ! why ever lowed the bull, on Golbun's echoing heath ? They saw him leaping like snow. The wrath of the chiefs returned !"

On Lubar's || grassy banks they fought ; Grudar fell in his blood. Fierce Cairbar came to the vale, where Brassolis §, fairest of his sisters, all alone, raised the song of grief. She sung of the actions of Grudar, the youth of her secret soul ! She mourned him in the field of blood ;
but

* The Cona here mentioned is that small river that runs through Glenco in Argyleshire. One of the hills which environ that romantic valley is still called Scornafena, or the hill of Fingal's people.

† This episode is introduced with propriety. Calmar and Connal, two of the Irish heroes, had disputed warmly before the battle about engaging the enemy. Carril endeavours to reconcile them with the story of Cairbar and Grudar ; who, though enemies before, fought *side by side* in the war. The poet obtained his aim, for we find Calmar and Connal perfectly reconciled in the third book.

‡ Golb-bhean, as well as Cromleach, signifies *a crooked hill*.

|| Lubar, a river in Ulster. *Labbar*, loud, noisy.

§ Brassolis signifies *a woman with a white breast*.

but still she hoped for his return. Her white bosom is seen from her robe, as the moon from the clouds of night, when its edge heaves white on the view, from the darkness which covers its orb. Her voice was softer than the harp to raise the song of grief. Her soul was fixed on Grudar. The secret look of her eye was his. "When shalt thou come in thine arms, thou mighty in the war?"

"Take, Brassolis," Cairbar came and said, "take, Brassolis, this shield of blood. Fix it on high within my hall, the armour of my foe! Her soft heart beat against her side. Distracted, pale, she flew. She found her youth in all his blood; she died on Cromla's heath. Here rests their dust, Cuthullin! these lonely yews sprung from their tombs, and shade them from the storm. Fair was Brassolis on the plain! Stately was Grudar on the hill! The bard shall preserve their names, and send them down to future times!"

"Pleasant is thy voice, O Carrol," said the blue-eyed chief of Erin. "Pleasant are the words of other times! They are like the calm shower of spring; when the sun looks on the field, and the light cloud flies over the hills. O strike the harp in praise of my love, the lonely sun-beam of Dunscath! Strike the harp in the praise of Bragela; she that I left in the isle of Mist, the spouse of Semo's son! Dost thou raise thy fair face from the rock to find the sails of Cuthullin? The sea is rolling distant far; its white foam deceives thee for my sails. Retire, for it is night, my love; the dark winds sing in thy hair. Retire to the halls of my feasts; think of the times that are past. I will not return till the storm of war is ceased. O Connal! speak of war and arms, and send her from my mind.
Lovely

Lovely with her flowing hair is the white-bosomed daughter of Sorglan."

Connal, slow to speak, replied, " Guard against the race of Ocean. Send thy troop of night abroad, and watch the strength of Swaran. Cuthullin ! I am for peace till the race of Selma come : till Fingal come, the first of men, and beam, like the sun, on our fields !" The hero struck the shield of alarms, the warriors of the night moved on ! The rest lay in the heath of the deer, and slept beneath the dusky wind. The ghosts * of the lately dead were near, and swam on the gloomy clouds : And far distant, in the dark silence of Lena, the feeble voices of death were faintly heard.

* It was long the opinion of the ancient Scots, that a ghost was heard shrieking near the place where a death was to happen soon after. The accounts given, to this day, among the vulgar, of this extraordinary matter, are very poetical. The ghost comes, mounted on a meteor, and surrounds twice or thrice the place destined for the person to die ; and then goes along the road through which the funeral is to pass, shrieking at intervals ; at last, the meteor and ghost disappear above the burial place.

F I N G A L :

A N

A N C I E N T E P I C P O E M .

I N S I X B O O K S .

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B O O K I I .

ARGUMENT TO BOOK II.

The ghost of Crugal, one of the Irish heroes who was killed in battle, appearing to Connal, foretells the defeat of Cuthullin in the next battle; and earnestly advises him to make peace with Swaran. Connal communicates the vision; but Cuthullin is inflexible; from a principle of honour he would not be the first to sue for peace, and he resolved to continue the war. Morning comes; Swaran proposes dishonourable terms to Cuthullin, which are rejected. The battle begins, and is obstinately fought for some time, until, upon the flight of Grumal, the whole Irish army give way. Cuthullin and Connal cover their retreat: Carril leads them to a neighbouring hill, whither they are soon followed by Cuthullin himself, who descries the fleet of Fingal making towards the coast; but, night coming on, he lost sight of it again. Cuthullin, dejected after his defeat, attributes his ill success to the death of Ferda his friend, whom he had killed some time before. Carril, to shew that ill success did not always attend those who innocently killed their friends, introduces the episode of Comal and Galvina.

BOOK SECOND.

F I N G A L :

A N

ANCIENT EPIC POEM.

CONNAL * lay by the fount of the mountain stream, beneath the aged tree. A stone, with its moss, supported his head. Shrill through the heath of Lena, he heard the voice of night. At a distance from the heroes he lay; the son of the sword feared no foe! The hero beheld, in his rest, a dark-red stream of fire rushing down from the hill. Crugal sat upon the beam, a chief who fell in fight. He fell by the hand of Swaran, striving in the battle of heroes. His face is like the beam of the setting moon. His robes are of the clouds of the hill. His eyes are two decaying flames. Dark is the wound of his breast! "Crugal," said the mighty Connal, son of Dedgal, famed on the hill of hinds! "Why so pale and sad, thou breaker of the shields? Thou hast

* The scene here described will appear natural to those who have been in the Highlands of Scotland. The poet removes him to a distance from the army, to add more horror to the description of Crugal's ghost by the loneliness of the place.

hast never been pale for fear ! What disturbs the departed Crugal ?" Dim and in tears, he stood and stretched his pale hand over the hero. Faintly he raised his feeble voice, like the gale of the reedy Lego !

"My spirit, Connal, is on my hills : my corse on the sands of Erin. Thou shalt never talk with Crugal, nor find his lone steps in the heath. I am light as the blast of Cromla. I move like the shadow of mist ! Connal, son of Colgar, I see a cloud of death : it hovers dark over the plains of Lena. The sons of green Erin must fall. Remove from the field of ghosts." Like the darkened moon he retired, in the midst of the whistling blast. "Stay," said the mighty Connal, "stay my dark red friend. Lay by that beam of heaven, son of the windy Cromla ! What cave is thy lonely house ? What green-headed hill the place of thy repose ? Shall we not hear thee in the storm ? In the noise of the mountain-stream ? When the feeble sons of the wind come forth, and scarcely seen, pass over the desert ?"

The soft-voiced Connal rose, in the midst of his sounding arms. He struck his shield above Cuthullin. The son of battle waked. "Why," said the ruler of the car, "comes Connal through my night ? My spear might turn against the sound ; and Cuthullin mourn the death of his friend. Speak Connal ; son of Colgar, speak, thy counsel is the son of heaven !" "Son of Semo !" replied the chief, "the ghost of Crugal came from his cave. The stars dim-twinkled through his form. His voice was like the sound of a distant stream. He is a messenger of death ! He speaks of the dark and narrow house ! Sue for peace, O chief of Erin ! or fly over the heath of Lena."

"He

“He spoke to Connal,” replied the hero, “though stars dim-twinkled through his form! Son of Colgar, it was the wind that murmured across thy ear. Or if it was the form* of Cru-gal, why didst thou not force him to my fight? Hast thou inquired where is his cave? The house of that son of wind? My sword might find that voice, and force his knowledge from Cru-gal. But small is his knowledge, Connal; he was here to-day. He could not have gone beyond our hills! who could tell him there of our fall?” “Ghosts fly on clouds, and ride on winds,” said Connal’s voice of wisdom. “They rest together in their caves, and talk of mortal men.”

“Then let them talk of mortal men; of every man but Erin’s chief. Let me be forgot in their cave. I will not fly from Swaran! If fall I must, my tomb shall rise, amidst the fame of future times. The hunter shall shed a tear on my stone; sorrow shall dwell round the high-bosomed Bragela. I fear not death, to fly I fear! Fingal has seen me victorious! Thou dim phantom of the hill, shew thyself to me! Come on thy beam of heaven, shew me my death in thine hand; yet I will not fly, thou feeble son of the wind! Go, son of Colgar, strike the shield. It hangs between the spears. Let my warriors rise to the sound, in the midst of the battles of Erin. Though Fingal delays his coming with the race of his stormy isles; we shall fight, O Colgar’s son, and die in the battle of heroes!”

VOL. I.

B

The

* The poet teaches us the opinions that prevailed in his time concerning the state of separate souls. From Connal’s expression, “That the stars dim-twinkled through the form of Cru-gal,” and Cuthullin’s reply, we may gather that they both thought the soul was material; something like the *eidolon* of the ancient Greeks.

The sound spreads wide. The heroes rise, like the breaking of a blue-rolling wave. They stood on the heath, like oaks with all their branches round them; when they echo to the stream of frost, and their withered leaves are rustling to the wind! High Cromla's head of clouds is grey. Morning trembles on the half-enlightened ocean. The blue mist swims slowly by, and hides the sons of Inis-fail!

"Rise ye," said the king of the dark-brown shields, "ye that came from Lochlin's waves. The sons of Erin have fled from our arms; pursue them over the plains of Lena! Morla, go to Cormac's hall. Bid them yield to Swaran; before his people sink to the tomb; and silence spread over his isle." They rose rustling like a flock of sea-fowl, when the waves expel them from the shore. Their sound was like a thousand streams that meet in Cona's vale, when, after a stormy night, they turn their dark eddies, beneath the pale light of the morn.

As the dark shades of autumn fly over hills of grass: so gloomy, dark, successive came the chiefs of Lochlin's echoing woods. Tall as the stag of Morven, moved stately before them the king. His shining shield is on his side, like a flame on the heath at night. When the world is silent and dark, and the traveller sees some ghost sporting in the beam! Dimly gleam the hills around, and shew indistinctly their oaks! A blast from the troubled ocean removed the settled mist. The sons of Erin appear, like a ridge of rocks on the coast; when mariners, on shores unknown, are trembling at veering winds!

"Go, Morla, go," said the king of Lochlin, "offer peace to these! Offer the terms we give to kings, when nations bow down to our swords.

When

When the valiant are dead in war; when virgins weep on the field!" Tall Morla came, the son of Swarth, and stately strode the youth along! He spoke to Erin's blue-ey'd chief, among the lesser heroes. "Take Swaran's peace," the warrior spoke, "the peace he gives to kings, when nations bow to his sword. Leave Erin's streamy plains to us, and give thy spouse and dog. Thy spouse high-bosom'd, heaving fair! Thy dog that overtakes the wind! Give these to prove the weakness of thine arm; live then beneath our power."

"Tell Swaran, tell that heart of pride, Cuthullin never yields. I give him the dark rolling sea; I give his people graves in Erin. But never shall a stranger have the pleasing sun-beam of my love. No deer shall fly on Lochlin's hills, before swift-footed Luath." "Vain ruler of the car," said Morla, "wilt thou then fight the king? The king whose ships of many groves could carry off thine isle? So little is thy green-hilled Erin to him who rules the stormy waves!" "In words I yield to many, Morla. My sword shall yield to none. Erin shall own the sway of Cormac, while Connal and Cuthullin live! O Connal, first of mighty men, thou hear'st the words of Morla. Shall thy thoughts then be of peace, thou breaker of the shields? Spirit of fallen Crugal! why didst thou threaten us with death? The narrow house shall receive me, in the midst of the light of renown. Exalt, ye sons of Erin, exalt the spear and bend the bow: rush on the foe in darkness, as the spirits of stormy nights!"

Then dismal, roaring, fierce, and deep the gloom of battle poured along: as mist that is rolled on a valley, when storms invade the silent sun-shine of heaven! Cuthullin moves before in

arms, like an angry ghost before a cloud ; when meteors inclose him with fire ; when the dark winds are in his hand. Carril, far on the heath, bids the horn of battle sound. He raises the voice of song, and pours his soul into the minds of the brave.

“ Where,” said the mouth of the song, “ where is the fallen Crugal ? He lies forgot on earth ; the hall of shells* is silent. Sad is the spouse of Crugal ! She is a stranger † in the hall of her grief. But who is she, that, like a sun-beam, flies before the ranks of the foe ? It is Degrena ‡, lovely fair, the spouse of fallen Crugal. Her hair is on the wind behind. Her eye is red ; her voice is thrill. Pale, empty is thy Crugal now ! His form is in the cave of the hill. He comes to the ear of rest ; he raises his feeble voice ; like the humming of the mountain-bee ; like the collected flies of the eve ! But Degrena falls like a cloud of the morn ; the sword of Lochlin is in her side. Cairbar, she is fallen, the rising thought of thy youth. She is fallen, O Cairbar, the thought of thy youthful hours !”

Fierce Cairbar heard the mournful sound. He rushed along like ocean’s whale. He saw the death of his daughter : He roared in the midst of thousands. His spear met a son of Lochlin ! battle spreads from wing to wing ! As a hundred winds in Lochlin’s groves ; as fire in the pines of a hundred hills ; so loud, so ruinous, so vast the ranks of men are hewn down. Cuthullin cut off
heroes

* The ancient Scots, as well as the present Highlanders, drunk in shells ; hence it is that we so often meet, in the old poetry, with *the chief of shells*, and *the balls of shells*.

† Crugal had married Degrena but a little time before the battle, consequently she may with propriety be called a stranger in the hall of her grief.

‡ Deo-grena signifies a *sun-beam*.

heroes like thistles; Swaran wasted Erin. Cuirach fell by his hand, Cairbar of the bossy shield; Morglan lies in lasting rest: Ca-olt trembles as he dies! His white breast is stained with blood; his yellow hair stretched in the dust of his native land! He often had spread the feast where he fell. He often there had raised the voice of the harp: When his dogs leapt around for joy; and the youths of the chace prepared the bow!

Still Swaran advanced, as a stream, that bursts from the desert. The little hills are rolled in its course; the rocks are half-sunk by its side! But Cuthullin stood before him, like a hill, that catches the clouds of heaven. The winds contend on its head of pines; the hail rattles on its rocks. But, firm in its strength, it stands, and shades the silent vale of Cona! So Cuthullin shaded the sons of Erin, and stood in the midst of thousands. Blood rises like the fount of a rock, from panting heroes around. But Erin falls on either wing, like snow in the day of the sun.

“O sons of Erin,” said Grumal, “Lochlin conquers on the field. Why strive we as reeds against the wind? Fly to the hill of dark-brown hinds.” He fled like the stag of Morven; his spear is a trembling beam of light behind him. Few fled with Grumal, chief of the little soul: they fell in the battle of heroes, on Lena’s echoing heath. High on his car, of many gems, the chief of Erin stood. He slew a mighty son of Lochlin, and spoke, in haste, to Connal. “O Connal, first of mortal men, thou hast taught this arm of death! Though Erin’s sons have fled shall we not fight the foe? Carril, son of other times, carry my friends to that bushy hill. Here,

Connal, let us stand, like rocks, and save our flying friends."

Connal mounts the car of gems. They stretch their shields, like the darkened moon, the daughter of the starry skies, when she moves, a dun circle, through heaven; and dreadful change is expected by men. Sithfadda panted up the hill, and Sronnal haughty steed. Like waves behind a whale behind them rushed the foe. Now on the rising side of Cromla stood Erin's few sad sons; like a grove through which the flame had rushed hurried on by the winds of the stormy night; distant, withered, dark they stand, with not a leaf to shake in the gale.

Cuthullin stood beside an oak. He rolled his red eye in silence, and heard the wind in his bushy hair: the scout of ocean came, Moran the son of Fithil. "The ships," he cried, "the ships of the lonely isles. Fingal comes, the first of men, the breaker of the shields! The waves foam before his black prows! His masts with sails are like groves in clouds!" "Blow," said Cuthullin, "blow ye winds that rush along my isle of mist. Come to the death of thousands, O king of re-sounding Selma! Thy sails, my friend, are to me the clouds of the morning; thy ships the light of heaven; and thou thyself a pillar of fire that beams on the world by night. O Connal, first of men, how pleasing, in grief, are our friends! But the night is gathering around! Where now are the ships of Fingal? Here let us pass the hours of darkness; here wish for the moon of heaven."

The winds come down on the woods. The torrents rush from the rocks. Rain gathers round the head of Cromla. The red stars tremble between the flying clouds. Sad, by the side
of

of a stream whose sound is echoed by a tree, sad by the side of a stream the chief of Erin sits. Connal son of Colgar is there, and Carril of other times. "Unhappy is the hand of Cuthullin," said the son of Semo, "unhappy is the hand of Cuthullin since he slew his friend! Ferda, son of Damman, I loved thee as myself!"

"How, Cuthullin, son of Semo! how fell the breaker of the shields? Well I remember," said Connal, "the son of the noble Damman. 'Tall and fair he was like the rainbow of heaven.' Ferda from Albion came, the chief of a hundred hills. In Muri's * hall he learned the sword, and won the friendship of Cuthullin. We moved to the chace together: one was our bed in the heath!

Deugala was the spouse of Cairbar, chief of the plains of Ulin. She was covered with the light of beauty, but her heart was the house of pride. She loved that sun-beam of youth, the son of noble Damman. "Cairbar," said the white-armed Deugala, "give me half of the herd. No more I will remain in your halls. Divide the herd, dark Cairbar!" "Let Cuthullin," said Cairbar, "divide my herd on the hill. His breast is the seat of justice. Depart, thou light of beauty! I went and divided the herd. One snow-white bull remained. I gave that bull to Cairbar. The wrath of Deugala rose!

"Son of Damman," begun the fair, "Cuthullin has pained my soul. I must hear of his death, or Lubar's stream shall roll over me. My pale ghost shall wander near thee, and mourn the wound of my pride. Pour out the blood of Cuthullin, or pierce this heaving breast." "Deugala," said the fair-haired youth, "how shall I slay the son of Semo? He is the friend of my

* A place in Ulster.

secret thoughts. Shall I then lift the sword?" She wept three days before the chief, on the fourth he said he would fight. "I will fight my friend Deugala! but may I fall by his sword! Could I wander on the hill alone? Could I behold the grave of Cuthullin?" We fought on the plain of Muri. Our swords avoid a wound. They slide on the helmets of steel; or sound on the slippery shields. Deugala was near with a smile, and said to the son of Dannan: "Thine arm is feeble, sun-beam of youth! Thy years are not strong for steel. Yield to the son of Semo. He is a rock on Malmor."

The tear is in the eye of youth. He faltering said to me: "Cuthullin, raise thy bossy shield. Defend thee from the hand of thy friend. My soul is laden with grief: for I must slay the chief of men!" I sighed as the wind in the cleft of a rock. I lifted high the edge of my steel. The sun-beam of battle fell: the first of Cuthullin's friends! Unhappy is the hand of Cuthullin since the hero fell!

"Mournful is thy tale, son of the car," said Carril of other times. "It sends my soul back to the ages of old, to the days of other years. Often have I heard of Comal, who slew the friend he loved; yet victory attended his steel: the battle was consumed in his presence!"

Comal was a son of Albion; the chief of an hundred hills! His deer drunk of a thousand streams. A thousand rocks replied to the voice of his dogs. His face was the mildness of youth. His hand the death of heroes. One was his love, and fair was she! the daughter of mighty Conloch. She appeared like a sun-beam among women. Her hair was the wing of the raven. Her dogs were taught to the chase. Her bow-string sounded

founded on the winds. Her soul was fixed on Comal. Often met their eyes of love. Their course in the chace was one. Happy were their words in secret. But Grumal loved the maid, the dark chief of the gloomy Ardven. He watched her lone steps in the heath; the foe of unhappy Comal!

One day, tired of the chace, when the mist had concealed their friends, Comal and the daughter of Conloch met, in the cave of Ronan. It was the wonted haunt of Comal. Its sides were hung with his arms. A hundred shields of thongs were there; a hundred helms of sounding steel. "Rest here," he said, "my love Galbina: thou light of the cave of Ronan: a deer appears on Mora's brow. I go; but I will soon return." "I fear," she said, "dark Grumal my foe: he haunts the cave of Ronan! I will rest among the arms; but soon return, my love."

He went to the deer of Mora. The daughter of Conloch would try his love. She cloathed her fair sides with his armour; she trode from the cave of Ronan! He thought it was his foe. His heart beat high. His colour changed, and darkness dimmed his eyes. He drew the bow. The arrow flew. Galbina fell in blood! He run with wildness in his steps: he called the daughter of Conloch. No answer in the lonely rock. Where art thou, O my love? He saw, at length, her heaving heart, beating around the arrow he threw. "O Conloch's daughter, is it thou?" He sunk upon her breast! The hunters found the hapless pair. He afterwards walked the hill. But many and silent were his steps round the dark dwelling of his love. The fleet of the ocean came. He fought, the strangers fled. He searched for

death along the field. But who could slay the mighty Comal ! He threw away his dark brown shield. An arrow found his manly breast. He sleeps with his loved Galbina at the noise of the founding surge ! Their green tombs are seen by the mariner, when he bounds on the waves of the north.

F I N G A L:

A N

ANCIENT EPIC POEM.

IN SIX BOOKS.

BOOK III.

B 6

ARGUMENT TO BOOK III.

Cuthullin, pleased with the story of Carril, insists with that bard for more of his songs. He relates the actions of Fingal in Lochlin, and death of Agendecca the beautiful sister of Swaran. He had scarce finished, when Calmar, the son of Matha, who had advised the first battle, came wounded from the field, and told them of Swaran's design to surprise the remains of the Irish army. He himself proposes to withstand singly the whole force of the enemy, in a narrow pass, till the Irish should make good their retreat. Cuthullin, touched with the gallant proposal of Calmar, resolves to accompany him, and orders Carril to carry off the few that remained of the Irish. Morning comes, Calmar dies of his wounds; and, the ships of the Caledonians appearing, Swaran gives over the pursuit of the Irish, and returns to oppose Fingal's landing. Cuthullin ashamed, after his defeat, to appear before Fingal, retires to the cave of Tura. Fingal engages the enemy, puts them to flight; but the coming on of night makes the victory not decisive. The king, who had observed the gallant behaviour of his grandson Oscar, gives him advices concerning his conduct in peace and war. He recommends to him to place the example of his fathers before his eyes, as the best model for his conduct: which introduces the episode concerning Fainasollis, the daughter of the king of Craca, whom Fingal had taken under his protection, in his youth. Fillan and Oscar are dispatched to observe the motions of the enemy by night; Gaul, the son of Morni, desires the command of the army in the next battle, which Fingal promises to give him. Some general reflections of the poet close the third day.

BOOK THIRD*.

F I N G A L:

A N

ANCIENT EPIC POEM.

“ PLEASANT are the words of the song,” said Cuthullin! “ lovely the tales of other times! They are, like the calm dew of the morning on the hill of roes; when the sun is faint on its side, and the lake is settled and blue in the vale. O Carril, raise again thy voice! let me hear the song of Selma: which was sung in my halls of joy, when Fingal king of shields was there, and glowed at the deeds of his fathers.”

“ Fingal! thou dweller of battle,” said Carril, “ early were thy deeds in arms. Lochlin was consumed in thy wrath, when thy youth strove with the beauty of maids. They smiled at the fair-blooming face of the hero; but death was in his hands. He was strong as the waters of Lora. His followers were the roar of a thousand streams. They took the king of Lochlin in war; they restored him to his ships. His big heart swelled with

* The second night, since the opening of the poem, continues; and Cuthullin, Connal, and Carril still sit in the place described in the preceding book. The story of Agandecca is introduced here with propriety, as great use is made of it in the course of the poem, and as it, in some measure, brings about the catastrophe.

with pride; the death of the youth was dark in his soul. For none ever, but Fingal, had overcome the strength of the mighty Starno*. He sat in the hall of his shells in Lochlin's woody land. He called the grey-haired Snivan, that often sung round the circle† of Loda: when the stone of power heard his voice, and battle turned in the field of the valiant!"

"Go; grey-haired Snivan," Starno said, "go to Ardven's sea-surrounded rocks. Tell to the king of Selma; he the fairest among his thousands, tell him I give him my daughter, the loveliest maid that ever heaved a breast of snow. Her arms are white as the foam of my waves. Her soul is generous and mild. Let him come with his bravest heroes, to the daughter of the secret hall!" Snivan came to Selma's hall: Fair-haired Fingal attended his steps. His kindled soul flew to the maid, as he bounded on the waves of the north. "Welcome," said the dark-brown Starno, "welcome, king of rocky Morven: welcome his heroes of might, sons of the distant isle! Three days within my halls shall ye feast; three days pursue my boars; that your fame may reach the maid who dwells in the secret hall."

Starno designed their death. He gave the feast of shells. Fingal, who doubted the foe, kept on his arms of steel. The sons of death were afraid: They fled from the eyes of the king. The voice of sprightly mirth arose. The trembling harps of joy were strung. Bards sung the battle of heroes: They sung the heaving breast of love.

Ullin,

* Starno was the father of Swaran, as well as Agandecca. His fierce and cruel character is well marked in other poems concerning the times.

† This passage most certainly alludes to the religion of Lochlin; and *the stone of power* here mentioned, is the image of one of the deities of Scandinavia.

Ullin, Fingal's bard, was there : the sweet voice of resounding Cona. He praised the daughter of Lochlin ; and Morven's * high-descended chief. The daughter of Lochlin overheard. She left the hall of her secret sigh ! She came in all her beauty, like the moon from the cloud of the east. Loveliness was around her as light. Her steps were the music of songs. She saw the youth and loved him. He was the stolen sigh of her soul. Her blue eye rolled on him in secret : She blest the chief of resounding Morven.

The third day, with all its beams, shone bright on the wood of boars. Forth moved the dark-browed Starno ; and Fingal, king of shields. Half the day they spent in the chace ; the spear of Selma was red in blood. It was then the daughter of Starno, with blue eyes rolling in tears ; it was then she came with her voice of love, and spoke to the king of Morven. " Fingal, high descended chief, trust not Starno's heart of pride. Within that wood he has placed his chiefs. Beware of the wood of death. But, remember, son of the isle, remember Agandecca : Save me from the wrath of my father, king of the windy Morven !"

The youth, with unconcern, went on ; his heroes by his side. The sons of death fell by his hand ; and Gormalechoed around ! Before the halls of Starno the sons of the chace convened. The king's dark brows were like clouds. His eyes like meteors of night. " Bring hither," he said, " Agandecca to her lovely king of Morven ! His hand is stained with the blood of my people ; her words have not been in vain !" She came with the

* All the North-west coast of Scotland probably went of old under the name of Morven, which signifies a ridge of very high hills.

the red eye of tears. She came with loosely flowing locks. Her white breast heaved with broken sighs, like the foam of the streamy Lubar. Starvo pierced her side with steel. She fell, like a wreath of snow, which slides from the rocks of Ronan; when the woods are still, and echo deepens in the vale! Then Fingal eyed his valiant chiefs; his valiant chiefs took arms. The gloom of battle roared; Lochlin fled or died. Pale, in his bounding ship he closed the maid of the softest soul. Her tomb ascends on Ardrven; the sea roars round her narrow dwelling.

“Blessed be her soul,” said Cuthullin; “blessed be the mouth of the song! Strong was the youth of Fingal; strong is his arm of age. Lochlin shall fall again before the king of echoing Morven. Show thy face from a cloud, O moon! light his white sails on the wave: And if any strong spirit * of heaven sits on that low-hung cloud; turn his dark ships from the rock, thou rider of the storm!”

Such were the words of Cuthullin at the fount of the mountain-stream; when Calmar ascended the hill, the wounded son of Matha. From the field he came in his blood. He leaned on his bending spear. Feeble is the arm of battle! but strong the soul of the hero! “Welcome! O son of Matha,” said Connal, “Welcome art thou to thy friends! Why bursts that broken sigh, from the breast of him who never feared before?” “And never, Connal, will he fear, chief of the
pointed

* This is the only passage in the poem that has the appearance of religion. But Cuthullin’s apostrophe to this spirit is accompanied with a doubt, so that it is not easy to determine whether the hero meant a superior being, or the ghosts of deceased warriors, who were supposed in those times to rule the storms, and to transport themselves in a gust of wind from one country to another.

pointed steel ! My soul brightens in danger : In the noise of arms. I am of the race of battle. My fathers never feared.

“ Cormar was the first of my race. He sported through the storms of waves. His black skiff bounded on ocean ; he travelled on the wings of the wind. A spirit once embroiled the night. Seas swell, and rocks resound. Winds drive along the clouds. The lightning flies on wings of fire. He feared, and came to land ; then blushed that he feared at all. He rushed again among the waves to find the son of the wind. Three youths guide the bounding bark ; he stood with sword unsheathed. When the low-hung vapour passed, he took it by the curling head. He searched its dark womb with his steel. The son of the wind forsook the air. The moon and stars returned ! Such was the boldness of my race. Calmar is like his fathers. Danger flies from the lifted sword. They best succeed who dare !

“ But now, ye sons of green Erin, retire from Lena’s bloody heath. Collect the sad remnant of our friends, and join the sword of Fingal. I heard the sound of Lochlin’s advancing arms ! Calmar will remain and fight. My voice shall be such, my friends, as if thousands were behind me. But, son of Semo, remember me. Remember Calmar’s lifeless corse. When Fingal shall have wasted the field, place me by some stone of remembrance, that future times may hear my fame ; that the mother of Calmar may rejoice in my renown.”

“ No : son of Matha,” said Cuthullin, “ I will never leave thee here. My joy is in unequal fight : My soul increases in danger. Connal, and Carril of other times, carry off the sad sons
of

of Erin. When the battle is over, search for us in this narrow way. For near this oak we shall fall, in the stream of the battle of thousands!" "O Eithil's son, with flying speed rush over the heath of Lena. Tell to Fingal that Erin is fallen. Bid the king of Morven come. O let him come, like the sun in a storm, to lighten, to restore the isle!"

Morning is grey on Cromla. The sons of the sea ascend. Calmar stood forth to meet them in the pride of his kindling soul. But pale was the face of the chief. He leaned on his father's spear. That spear which he brought from Lara, when the soul of his mother was sad; the soul of the lonely Alcletha, waning in the sorrow of years. But slowly now the hero falls, like a tree on the plain. Dark Cuthullin stands alone like a rock in a sandy vale. The sea comes with its waves, and roars on its hardened sides. Its head is covered with foam; the hills are echoing around.

Now from the grey mist of the ocean, the white-ailed ships of Fingal appear. High is the grove of their masts, as they nod, by turns, on the rolling wave. Swaran saw them from the hill. He returned from the sons of Erin. As ebbs the resounding sea, through the hundred isles of Inistore; so loud, so vast, so immense returned the sons of Lochlin against the king. But bending, weeping, sad, and slow, and dragging his long spear behind, Cuthullin sunk in Cromla's wood, and mourned his fallen friends. He feared the face of Fingal, who was wont to greet him from the fields of renown!

"How many lie there of my heroes! the chiefs of Erin's race! they that were cheerful in the hall, when the sound of the shells arose!

No

No more shall I find their steps in the heath.
No more shall I hear their voice in the chace.
Pale, silent, low on bloody beds, are they who
were my friends ! O spirits of the lately dead,
meet Cuthullin on his heath ! Speak to him on
the wind, when the rustling tree of Tura's cave
resounds. There, far remote, I shall lie un-
known. No bard shall hear of me. No grey
stone shall rise to my renown. Mourn me with
the dead, O Bragela ! departed is my fame."
Such were the words of Cuthullin, when he sunk
in the woods of Cromla !

Fingal, tall in his ship, stretched his bright
lance before him. Terrible was the gleam of the
steel : It was like the green meteor of death, set-
ting in the heath of Malmor, when the traveller
is alone, and the broad moon is darkened in hea-
ven.

"The battle is past," said the king. "I be-
hold the blood of my friends. Sad is the heath
of Lena ! mournful the oaks of Cromla ! The
hunters have fallen in their strength : The son of
Semo is no more. Ryno and Fillan, my sons,
found the horn of Fingal. Ascend that hill on
the shore ; call the children of the foe. Call
them from the grave of Lamdarg, the chief of
other times. Be your voice like that of your fa-
ther, when he enters the battles of his strength.
I wait for the mighty stranger. I wait on Le-
na's shore for Swaran. Let him come with all
his race ; strong in battle are the friends of the
dead !"

Fair Ryno as lightning gleamed along : Dark
Fillan rushed like the shade of autumn. On
Lena's heath their voice is heard. The sons of
ocean heard the horn of Fingal. As the roaring
eddy of ocean returning from the kingdom of
snows ;

snows; so strong, so dark, so sudden came down the sons of Lochlin. The king in their front appears, in the dismal pride of his arms. Wrath burns on his dark-brown face: His eyes roll in the fire of his valour. Fingal beheld the son of Starno: He remembered Agandecca. For Swaran, with the tears of youth, had mourned his white-bosomed sister. He sent Ullin of songs to bid him to the feast of shells: For pleasant on Fingal's soul returned the memory of the first of his loves!

Ullin came with aged steps, and spoke to Starno's son. "O thou that dwellest afar, surrounded, like a rock, with thy waves! come to the feast of the king, and pass the day in rest. To-morrow let us fight, O Swaran, and break the echoing shields." "To-day," said Starno's wrathful son, "we break the echoing shields: to-morrow my feast shall be spread; but Fingal shall lie on earth." "To-morrow let his feast be spread," said Fingal with a smile. "To-day, O my sons! we shall break the echoing shields. Ossian, stand thou near my arms. Gaul, lift thy terrible sword. Fergus, bend thy crooked yew. Throw, Fillan, thy lance through heaven. Lift your shields, like the darkened moon. Be your spears the meteors of death. Follow me in the path of my fame. Equal my deeds in battle."

As a hundred winds on Morven; as the streams of a hundred hills; as clouds fly successive over heaven; as the dark ocean assails the shore of the desert: so roaring, so vast, so terrible the armies mixed on Lena's echoing heath. The groan of the people spread over the hills: It was like the thunder of night, when the clouds burst on Cona; and a thousand ghosts shriek at once on the hollow wind. Fingal rushed on in his strength,

strength, terrible as the spirit of Trenmor; when, in a whirlwind, he comes to Morven, to see the children of his pride. The oaks resound on their mountains, and the rocks fall down before him. Dimly seen, as lightens the night, he strides largely from hill to hill. Bloody was the hand of my father, when he whirled the gleam of his sword. He remembers the battles of his youth. The field is wasted in his course!

Ryno went on like a pillar of fire. Dark is the brow of Gaul. Fergus rushed forward with feet of wind. Fillan like the mist of the hill. Ossian, like a rock, came down. I exulted in the strength of the king. Many were the deaths of my arm! dismal the gleam of my sword! My locks were not then so grey; nor trembled my hands with age. My eyes were not closed in darkness; my feet failed not in the race!

Who can relate the deaths of the people? Who the deeds of mighty heroes? when Fingal burning in his wrath, consumed the sons of Lochlin? groans swelled on groans from hill to hill, till night had covered all. Pale, staring like a herd of deer, the sons of Lochlin convene on Lena. We sat and heard the sprightly harp, at Lubar's gentle stream. Fingal himself was next to the foe. He listened to the tales of his bards. His godlike race were in the song, the chiefs of other times. Attentive, leaning on his shield, the king of Morven sat. The wind whistled through his locks; his thoughts are of the days of other years. Near him on his bending spear, my young, my valiant Oscar stood. He admired the king of Morven: His deeds were swelling in his soul!

“Son

“ Son of my son,” begun the king, “ O Oscar, pride of youth ! I saw the shining of thy sword. I gloried in my race. Pursue the fame of our fathers ; be thou what they have been, when Trenmor lived, the first of men, and Trathal the fathar of heroes ! They fought the battle in their youth. They are the song of bards. O Oscar ! bend the strong in arm ; but spare the feeble hand. Be thou a stream of many tides against the foes of thy people ; but like the gale, that moves the grass, to those who ask thine aid. So Trenmor lived ; such Trathal was ; and such has Fingal been. My arm was the support of the injured ; the weak rested behind the lightning of my steel.

“ Oscar ! I was young like thee, when lovely Fainafollis came : That sun-beam ! that mild light of love ! the daughter of * Craca’s king ! I then returned from Cona’s heath, and few were in my train. A white-tailed boat appeared far off ; we saw it like a mist, that rode on ocean’s wind. It soon approached. We saw the fair. Her white breast heaved with sighs. The wind was in her loose dark hair : Her rosy cheek had tears. “ Daughter of beauty,” calm I said, “ what sigh is in thy breast ? Can I, young as I am, defend thee, daughter of the sea ? My sword is not unmatched in war, but dauntless is my heart.”

“ To thee I fly,” with sighs she said, “ O prince of mighty men ! To thee I fly, chief of the generous shells, supporter of the feeble hand ! The king of Craca’s echoing isle owned me the sunbeam of his race. Cromala’s hills have heard the
the

* What the Craca here mentioned was, is not, at this distance of time, easy to determine. The most probable opinion is, that it was one of the Shetland isles. There is a story concerning a daughter of the king of Craca in the sixth book.

the sighs of love for unhappy Fainasollis ! Sora's chief beheld me fair ; he loved the daughter of Craca. His sword is a beam of light upon the warrior's side. But dark is his brow ; and tempests are in his soul. I shun him, on the roaring sea ; but Sora's chief pursues."

" Rest thou," I said, " behind my shield ; rest in peace, thou beam of light ! The gloomy chief of Sora will fly, if Fingal's arm is like his soul. In some lone cave I might conceal thee, daughter of the sea ! But Fingal never flies. Where the danger threatens, I rejoice in the storm of spears." I saw the tears upon her cheek. I pitied Craca's fair. Now, like a dreadful wave afar, appeared the ship of stormy Borbar. His masts high-bended over the sea behind their sheets of snow. White roll the waters on either side. The strength of ocean sounds. " Come thou," I said, " from the roar of ocean, thou rider of the storm ! Partake the feast within my hall. It is the house of strangers."

The maid stood trembling by my side. He drew the bow. She fell. " Unerring is thy hand," I said, " but feeble was the foe ! " We fought, nor weak the strife of death ! He sunk beneath my sword. We laid them in two tombs of stone ; the hapless lovers of youth ! Such have I been in my youth, O Oscar ! be thou like the age of Fingal. Never search thou for battle ; nor shun it when it comes.

" Fillan and Oscar of the dark-brown hair ! ye, that are swift in the race ! fly over the heath in my presence. View the sons of Lochlin. Far off I hear the noise of their feet, like distant sounds in woods. Go : that they may not fly from my sword, along the waves of the north. For many chiefs of Erin's race lie here on the dark
bed

bed of death. The children of war are low ; the sons of echoing Cromla."

The heroes flew like two dark clouds : two dark clouds that are the chariots of ghosts ; when air's dark children come forth to frighten hapless men. It was then that Gaul *, the son of Morni, stood like a rock in night. His spear is glittering to the stars ; his voice like many streams.

" Son of battle," cried the chief, " O Fingal, king of shells ! let the bards of many songs sooth Erin's friends to rest. Fingal, sheath thou thy sword of death ; and let thy people fight. We wither away without our fame ; our king is the only breaker of shields ! When morning rises on our hills, behold, at a distance, our deeds. Let Lochlin feel the sword of Morni's son ; that bards may sing of me. Such was the custom heretofore of Fingal's noble race. Such was thine own, thou king of swords, in battles of the spear."

" O son of Morni," Fingal replied, " I glory in thy fame. Fight ; but my spear shall be near, to aid thee in the midst of danger. Raise, raise the voice, ye sons of song ! and lull me into rest. Here will Fingal lie, amidst the wind of night. And if thou, Agandecca, are near, among the children of thy land ; if thou fittest on a blast of wind, among the high-shrowded masts of Lochlin ! come to my dreams †, my fair one. Show thy bright face to my soul."

Many

* Gaul, the son of Morni, was chief of a tribe that disputed long the pre-eminence with Fingal himself. They were reduced at last to obedience, and Gaul, from an enemy, turned Fingal's best friend and greatest hero. His character is something like that of Ajax in the Iliad ; a hero of more strength than conduct in battle. He was very fond of military fame, and here he demands the next battle to himself. The poet, by an artifice, removes Fingal, that his return may be the more magnificent.

† The poet prepares us for the dream of Fingal in the next book.

Many a voice and many a harp, in tuneful
sounds arose. Of Fingal's noble deeds they sung;
of Fingal's noble race : And sometimes, on the
lovely sound, was heard the name of Ossian. I
often fought, and often won, in battles of the spear.
But blind, and tearful, and forlorn I walk with
little men ! O Fingal, with thy race of war, I now
behold thee not ! The wild roes feed on the
green tomb of the mighty king of Morven ! Blest
be thy soul, thou king of swords, thou most re-
nowned on the hills of Cona !

F I N G A L :

A N

A N C I E N T E P I C P O E M .

I N S I X B O O K S .

B O O K I V .

C 2

ARGUMENT TO BOOK IV.

The action of the poem being suspended by night, Ossian takes that opportunity to relate his own actions at the lake of Lego, and his courtship of Evirallin, who was the mother of Oscar, and had died some time before the expedition of Fingal into Ireland. Her ghost appears to him, and tells him that Oscar, who had been sent, the beginning of the night, to observe the enemy, was engaged with an advanced party and almost overpowered. Ossian relieves his son; and an alarm is given to Fingal of the approach of Swaran. The king rises, calls his army together, and, as he had promised the preceding night, devolves the command on Gaul the son of Morni, while he himself, after charging his sons to behave gallantly and defend his people, retires to a hill, from whence he could have a view of the battle. The battle joins; the poet relates Oscar's great actions. But when Oscar, in conjunction with his father, conquered in one wing, Gaul, who was attacked by Swaran in person, was on the point of retreating in the other. Fingal sends Ullin his bard to encourage him with a war song, but notwithstanding Swaran prevails; and Gaul and his army are obliged to give way. Fingal, descending from the hill, rallies them again: Swaran desists from the pursuit, possesses himself of a rising ground, restores the ranks, and waits the approach of Fingal. The king, having encouraged his men, gives the necessary orders, and renews the battle. Cuthullin, who, with his friend Connal, and Carril his bard, had retired to the cave of Tura, hearing the noise, came to the brow of the hill, which overlooked the field of battle, where he saw Fingal engaged with the enemy. He, being hindered by Connal from joining Fingal, who was himself upon the point of obtaining a complete victory, sends Carril to congratulate that hero on his success.

BOOK FOURTH*.

F I N G A L :

A N

ANCIENT EPIC POEM.

WHO comes with her songs from the hill,
like the bow of the showery Lena? It is the
maid of the voice of love! the white-armed
daughter of Toscar! Often hast thou heard my
song; often given the tear of beauty. Dost thou
come to the wars of thy people? to hear the ac-
tions of Oscar? When shall I cease to mourn, by
the streams of resounding Cona? My years have
passed away in battle. My age is darkened with
grief!

C 3

“ Daughter”

* Fingal being asleep, and the action suspended by night, the poet introduces the story of his courtship of Evirallin the daughter of Branno. The episode is necessary to clear up several passages that follow in the poem; at the same time that it naturally brings on the action of the book, which may be supposed to begin about the middle of the third night from the opening of the poem. This book, as many of Ossian's other compositions, is addressed to the beautiful Malvina the daughter of Toscar. She appears to have been in love with Oscar, and to have affected the company of the father after the death of the son.

“ Daughter of the hand of snow ! I was not so mournful and blind. I was not so dark and forlorn, when Evirallin loved me ! Evirallin with the dark-brown hair, the white-bosomed daughter of Branno ! A thousand heroes fought the maid ; she refused her love to a thousand. The sons of the sword were despised : For graceful in her eyes was Ossian ! I went, in suit of the maid, to Lega’s fable surge. Twelve of my people were there, the sons of streamy Morven ! We came to Branno, friend of strangers ! Branno of the sounding mail ! “ From whence,” he said, “ are the arms of steel ? Not easy to win is the maid who has denied the blue-eyed sons of Erin ! But blest be thou, O son of Fingal ! Happy is the maid that waits thee ! Tho’ twelve daughters of beauty were mine, thine were the choice, thou son of fame !”

He opened the hall of the maid, the dark-haired Evirallin. Joy kindled in our manly breasts. We blest the maid of Branno. “ Above us on the hill appeared the people of stately Cormac. Eight were the heroes of the chief. The heath flamed wide with their arms. There Colla, there Durra of wounds, there mighty Toscar, and Tago, there Frestal the victorious stood ; Dairo of the happy deeds : Dala the battle’s bulwark in the narrow way ! The sword flamed in the hand of Cormac. Graceful was the look of the hero ! Eight were the heroes of Ossian. Ullin stormy son of war. Mullo of the generous deeds. The noble, the graceful Scelacha. Oglan, and Cerdal the wrathful. Dumariccan’s brows of death ! And why should Ogar be the last ; so wide renowned on the hills of Ardven !”

“ Ogar

“Ogar met Dala the strong, face to face, on the field of heroes. The battle of the chiefs was like wind, on ocean’s foamy waves. The dagger is remembered by Ogar; the weapon which he loved. Nine times he drowned it in Dala’s side. The stormy battle turned. Three times I broke on Cormac’s shield: Three times he broke his spear. But, unhappy youth of love! I cut his head away. Five times I shook it by the lock. The friends of Cormac fled. Whoever would have told me, lovely maid, when then I strove in battle; that blind, forsaken, and forlorn, I now should pass the night; firm ought his mail to have been; unmatched his arm in war!”

On * Lena’s gloomy heath, the voice of music died away. The inconstant blast blew hard. The high oak shook its leaves around. Of Eivallin were my thoughts, when in all the light of beauty she came. Her blue eyes rolling in tears. She stood on a cloud before my sight, and spoke with feeble voice! “Rise, Ossian, rise, and save my son; save Oscar prince of men. Near the red oak of Luba’s stream, he fights with Lochlin’s sons.” She sunk into her cloud again. I covered me with steel. My spear supported my steps; my rattling armour rung. I hummed, as I was wont in danger, the songs of heroes of old. Like distant thunder Lochlin heard. They fled; my son pursued.”

“I called him like a distant stream. Oscar return over Lena. “No further pursue the foe,” I said, though Ossian is behind thee.” He

C 4

came;

* The poet returns to his subject. If one could fix the time of the year in which the action of the poem happened, from the scene described here, I should be tempted to place it in autumn. The trees shed their leaves, and the winds are variable, both which circumstances agree with that season of the year.

came ; and pleasant to my ear was Oscar's sounding steel. " Why didst thou stop my hand," he said, " till death had covered all ? For dark and dreadful by the stream they met thy son and Fillan ! They watched the terrors of the night. Our swords have conquered some. But as the winds of night pour the ocean over the white sands of Mora, so dark advance the sons of Lochlin, over Lena's rustling heath ! The ghosts of night shriek afar ! I have seen the meteors of death. Let me awake the king of Morven, he that smiles in danger ! He that is like the sun of heaven, rising in a storm !"

Fingal had started from a dream, and leaned on Trenmor's shield ; the dark-brown shield of his fathers ; which they had lifted of old in war. The hero had seen, in his rest, the mournful form of Agandecca. She came from the way of the ocean. She slowly, lonely, moved over Lena. Her face was pale like the mist of Cromla. Dark were the tears of her cheek. She often raised her dim hand from her robe : Her robe which was of the clouds of the desert : She raised her dim hand over Fingal, and turned away her silent eyes ! " Why weeps the daughter of Star-no ?" said Fingal, with a sigh ; " why is thy face so pale, fair wanderer of the clouds ?" She departed on the wind of Lena. She left him in the midst of the night. She mourned the sons of her people, that were to fall by the hand of Fingal.

The hero started from rest. Still he beheld her in his soul. The sound of Oscar's steps approached. The king saw the grey shield on his side : For the faint beam of the morning came over the waters of Ullin. " What do the foes in their fear ?" said the rising king of Morven ;
" or

“ or fly they through ocean’s foam, or wait they the battle of steel? But why should Fingal ask? I hear their voice on the early wind! Fly over Lena’s heath: O Oscar, awake our friends!”

The king stood by the stone of Lubar. Thrice he reared his terrible voice. The deer started from the fountains of Cromla. The rocks shook on all their hills. Like the noise of a hundred mountain-streams, that burst, and roar, and foam! like the clouds, that gather to a tempest on the blue face of the sky! so met the sons of the desert, round the terrible voice of Fingal. Pleasant was the voice of the king of Morven to the warriors of his land. Often had he led them to battle; often returned with the spoils of the foe!

“ Come to battle,” said the king, “ ye children of echoing Selma! Come to the death of thousands. Comhal’s son will see the fight. My sword shall wave on the hill the defence of my people in war. But never may you need it, warriors! While the son of Morni fights, the chief of mighty men! He shall lead my battle; that his fame may rise in song! O ye ghosts of heroes dead! ye riders of the storm of Cromla! receive my falling people with joy, and bear them to your hills. And may the blast of Lena carry them over my seas, that they may come to my silent dreams, and delight my soul in rest! Fillan and Oscar, of the dark-brown hair! fair Ryno, with the pointed steel! advance with valour to the fight. Behold the son of Morni! Let your swords be like his in strife: Behold the deeds of his hands. Protect the friends of your father. Remember the chiefs of old. My children, I will see you yet, though here ye should fall in Erin. Soon shall our cold, pale ghosts meet in a cloud on Cona’s eddying winds!”

Now like a dark and stormy cloud, edged round with the red lightning of heaven ; flying westward from the morning's beam, the king of Selma removed. Terrible is the light of his armour ; two spears are in his hand. His grey hair falls on the wind. He often looks back on the war. Three bards attend the son of fame, to bear his words to the chiefs. High on Cromla's side he sat, waving the lightning of his sword, and as he waved we moved.

Joy rises in Oscar's face. His cheek is red. His eye sheds tears. The sword is a beam of fire in his hand. He came, and smiling, spoke to Ossian. " O ruler of the fight of steel ! my father, hear thy son ! Retire with Morven's mighty chief. Give me the fame of Ossian. If here I fall : O chief, remember that breast of snow, the lonely sun-beam of my love, the white-handed daughter of Toscar ! For, with red cheek from the rock, bending over the stream, her soft hair flies about her bosom, as she pours the sigh for Oscar. Tell her I am on my hills, a lightly-bounding son of the wind ; tell her, that in a cloud I may meet the lovely maid of Toscar." " Raise, Oscar, rather raise my tomb. I will not yield the war to thee. The first and bloodiest in the strife, my arm shall teach thee how to fight. But, remember, my son, to place this sword, this bow, the horn of my deer, within that dark and narrow house, whose mark is one grey stone ! Oscar, I have no love to leave to the care of my son. Evirallin is no more, the lovely daughter of Branno !"

Such were our words, when Gaul's loud voice came growing on the wind. He waved on high the sword of his father. We rushed to death and wounds. As waves, white-bubbling over
the

the deep, come swelling, roaring on; as rocks of ooze meet roaring waves; so foes attacked and fought. Man met with man, and steel with steel. Shields found, and warriors fall. As a hundred hammers on the red son of the furnace, so rose, so rung their swords!

Gaul rushed on, like a whirlwind in Arden. The destruction of heroes is on his sword. Swaran was like the fire of the desert in the echoing heath of Gormal! How can I give to the song the death of many spears? My sword rose high, and flamed in the strife of blood. Oscar, terrible wert thou, my best, my greatest son! I rejoice in my secret soul, when his sword flamed over the slain. They fled amain through Lena's heath. We pursued and slew. As stones that bound from rock to rock; as axes in echoing woods; as thunder rolls from hill to hill, in dismal broken peals; so blow succeeded to blow, and death to death, from the hand of Oscar and mine.

But Swaran closed round Morni's son, as the strength of the tide of Inistore. The king half-rose from his hill at the sight. He half-assumed the spear. "Go, Ullin, go, my aged bard," begun the king of Morven. "Remind the mighty Gaul of war. Remind him of his fathers. Support the yielding fight with song; for song enlivens war." Tall Ullin went, with step of age, and spoke to the king of swords. "Son * of the chief of generous steeds! high bounding king of spears. Strong arm in every
perilous

* The custom of encouraging men in battle with extempore rhymes has been carried down almost to our own times. Several of these war songs are extant, but the most of them are only a group of epithets, without either beauty or harmony, utterly destitute of poetical merit.

perilous toil. Hard heart that never yields. Chief of the pointed arms of death. Cut down the foe ; let no white sail bound round dark Inistore. Be thine arm like thunder, thine eyes like fire, thy heart of solid rock. Whirl round thy sword as a meteor at night ; lift thy shield like the flame of death. Son of the chief of generous steeds, cut down the foe. Destroy !" The hero's heart beat high. But Swaran came with battle. He cleft the shield of Gaul in twain. The sons of Selma fled.

Fingal at once arose in arms. Thrice he reared his dreadful voice. Cromla answered around. The sons of the desert stood still. They bent their flushing faces to earth, ashamed at the presence of the king. He came, like a cloud of rain in the day of the sun, when slow it rolls on the hill, and fields expect the shower. Silence attends its slow progress aloft ; but the tempest is soon to arise. Swaran beheld the terrible king of Morven. He stopped in the midst of his course. Dark he leaned on his spear, rolling his red eyes around. Silent and tall he seemed as an oak on the banks of Lubar, which had its branches blasted of old by the lightning of heaven. It bends over the stream : The grey moss whistles in the wind : So stood the king. Then slowly he retired to the rising heath of Lena. His thousands poured around the hero. Darkness gathers on the hill !

Fingal, like a beam from heaven, shone in the midst of his people. His heroes gather around him. He sends forth the voice of his power. " Raise my standards on high ; spread them on Lena's wind, like the flames of an hundred hills ! Let them sound on the winds of Erin, and remind us of the fight. Ye sons of the
the

the roaring streams that pour from a thousand hills, be near the king of Morven ! attend to the words of his power ! Gaul, strongest arm of death ! O Oscar, of the future fights ! Connal, son of the blue shields of Sora ! Dermid of the dark-brown hair ! Ossian king of many songs, be near your father's arm !” We reared the sun-beam * of battle ; the standard of the king ! Each hero exulted with joy, as, waving it flew on the wind. It was studded with gold above, as the blue wide shell of the nightly sky. Each hero had his standard too ; and each his gloomy men !

“ Behold,” said the king of generous shells, “ how Lochlin divides on Lena ! They stand like broken clouds on a hill ; or an half consumed grove of oaks ; when we see the sky through its branches, and the meteor passing behind ! Let every chief among the friends of Fingal take a dark troop of those that frown so high : Nor let a son of the echoing groves bound on the waves of Inistore !”

“ Mine,” said Gaul, “ be the seven chiefs, that came from Lano's lake.” “ Let Inistore's dark king,” said Oscar, “ come to the sword of Ossian's son.” “ To mine the king of Iniscon,” said Connal, “ heart of steel !” “ Or Mudan's chief or I,” said brown-haired Dermid, “ shall sleep on clay-cold earth.” “ My choice, though now so weak and dark, was Terman's battling king ; I promised with my hand to win the hero's dark-brown shield.” “ Blest and victorious be my chiefs,” said Fingal of the mildest look.

“ Swaran,

* Fingal's standard was distinguished by the name of *sun-beam* ; probably on account of its bright colour, and its being studded with gold. To begin a battle is expressed, in old composition, by *lifting up the sun-beam*.

“ Swaran, king of roaring waves, thou art the choice of Fingal !”

Now, like an hundred different winds, that pour through many vales ; divided, dark the sons of Selma advanced. Cromla echoed around ! “ How can I relate the deaths, when we closed in the strife of arms ! O daughter of Toscar ! bloody were our hands ! The gloomy ranks of Lochlin fell, like the banks of the roaring Cona ! Our arms were victorious on Lena : Each chief fulfilled his promise ! Beside the murmur of Branno thou didst often sit, O maid ! Thy white bosom rose frequent, like the down of the swan when slow she swims on the lake, and sidelong winds blow on her ruffled wing. Thou hast seen the sun retire, red and slow behind his cloud : Night gathering round on the mountain, while the unfrequent blast roared in the narrow vales. At length the rain beats hard : Thunder rolls in peals. Lightning glances on the rocks ! Spirits ride on beams of fire : The strength of the mountain-streams comes roaring down the hills. Such was the noise of battle, maid of the arms of snow ? Why, daughter of Toscar, why that tear ? The maids of Lochlin have cause to weep ! The people of their country fell. Bloody were the blue swords of the race of my heroes ! But I am sad, forlorn, and blind ; no more the companion of heroes. Give, lovely maid, to me thy tears. I have seen the tombs of all my friends !”

It was then, by Fingal's hand, a hero fell, to his grief ! Grey-haired he rolled in the dust. He lifted his faint eyes to the king : “ And is it by me thou hast fallen,” said the son of Comhall, “ thou friend of Agandecca ! I have seen thy
tears

tears for the maid of my love in the halls of the bloody Starno : Thou hast been the foe of the foes of my love, and hast thou fallen by my hand ? Raise, Ullin, raise the grave of Mathon, and give his name to Agandecca's song. Dear to my soul hast thou been, thou darkly-dwelling maid of Ardven !”

Cuthullin, from the cave of Cromla, heard the noise of the troubled war. He called to Connal, chief of swords ; to Carril of other times. The grey-haired heroes heard his voice. They took their pointed spears. They came, and saw the tide of battle, like ocean's crowded waves : when the dark wind blows from the deep, and rolls the billows through the sandy vale ! Cuthullin kindled at the sight. Darkness gathered on his brow. His hand is on the sword of his fathers : His red-rolling eyes on the foe. He thrice attempted to rush to battle. He thrice was stopt by Connal. “ Chief of the isle of mist,” he said, “ Fingal subdues the foe. Seek not a part of the fame of the king ; himself is like the storm !”

“ Then, Carril, go,” replied the chief, “ go, greet the king of Morven. When Lochlin falls away like a stream after rain ; when the noise of the battle is past. Then be thy voice sweet in his ear to praise the king of Selma ! Give him the sword of Caithbat. Cuthullin is not worthy to lift the arms of his fathers ! Come, O ye ghosts of the lonely Cromla ! Ye souls of chiefs that are no more ! Be near the steps of Cuthullin ; talk to him in the cave of his grief. Never more shall I be renowned, among the mighty in the land. I am a beam that has shone ; a mist that has fled away ; when the blast of the morning

morning came, and brightened the shaggy side of the hill : Connal ! talk of arms no more : Departed is my fame. My sighs shall be on Cromla's wind ; till my footsteps cease to be seen. And thou, white-bosom'd Bragela ; mourn over the fall of my fame : Vanquished, I will never return to thee, thou sunbeam of my soul !"

FINGAL:

AN

ANCIENT EPIC POEM.

IN SIX BOOKS.

BOOK V.

ARGUMENT TO BOOK V.

Cuthullin and Connal still remain on the hill. Fingal and Swaran meet ; the combat is described. Swaran is overcome, bound and delivered over as a prisoner to the care of Ossian and Gaul the son of Morni ; Fingal, his younger sons, and Oscar, still pursue the enemy. The episode of Orla, a chief of Lochlin, who was mortally wounded in the battle, is introduced. Fingal, touched with the death of Orla, orders the pursuit to be discontinued ; and calling his sons together, he is informed that Ryno, the youngest of them, was slain. He laments his death, hears the story of Lamdarg and Gelchoffa, and returns towards the place where he had left Swaran. Carril, who had been sent by Cuthullin to congratulate Fingal on his victory, comes in the mean time to Ossian. The conversation of the two poets closes the action of the fourth day.

BOOK FIFTH.

F I N G A L:

A N

ANCIENT EPIC POEM.

ON Cromla's resounding side, Connal spoke to the chief of the noble car. Why that gloom, son of Semo? Our friends are the mighty in fight. Renowned art thou, O warrior! Many were the deaths of thy steel. Often has Bragela met, with blue-rolling eyes of joy: Often has she met her hero, returning in the midst of the valiant; when his sword was red with slaughter; when his foes were silent in the fields of the tomb. Pleasant to her ears were thy bards, when thy deeds arose in song.

But behold the king of Morven! He moves, below, like a pillar of fire. His strength is like the stream of Lubar, or the wind of the echoing Cromla; when the branchy forests of night are torn from all their rocks! Happy are thy people, O Fingal! Thine arm shall finish their wars. Thou art the first in their dangers: The wisest in the days of their peace. Thou speakest, and thy thousands obey: Armies tremble at the sound of thy steel. Happy are thy people, O Fingal! king of resounding Selma! Who is that so dark and terrible coming in the thunder of his course? who but Starno's son to meet the king of Morven?

ven? Behold the battle of the chiefs! It is the storm of the ocean, when two spirits meet far distant, and contend for the rolling of waves. The hunter hears the noise on his hill. He sees the high billows advancing to Ardven's shore! Such were the words of Connal, when the heroes met in fight. There was the clang of arms! There every blow, like the hundred hammers of the furnace! Terrible is the battle of the kings; dreadful the look of their eyes. Their dark-brown shields are cleft in twain. Their steel flies, broken, from their helms. They fling their weapons down. Each rushes to his hero's grasp: Their sinewy arms bend round each other: They turn from side to side, and strain and stretch their large spreading limbs below. But when the pride of their strength arose, they shook the hill with their heels. Rocks tumble from their places on high; the green-headed bushes are overturned. At length the strength of Swaran fell: The king of the groves is bound. Thus have I seen on Cona; but Cona I behold no more! Thus have I seen two dark hills, removed from their place, by the strength of the bursting stream. They turn from side to side in their fall; their tall oaks meet one another on high. Then they tumble together with all their rocks and trees. The streams are turned by their side. The red ruin is seen afar.

“ Sons of distant Morven,” said Fingal :
“ guard the king of Lochlin! He is strong as his thousand waves. His hand is taught to war. His race is of the times of old. Gaul, thou first of my heroes; Ossian king of songs attend. He is the friend of Agandecca; raise to joy his grief. But, Oscar, Fillan, and Ryno, ye children of the race! Pursue Lochlin over Lena; that no vessel may.

may hereafter bound on the dark-rolling waves of Inistore !”

They flew sudden across the heath. He slowly moved, like a cloud of thunder, when the fultry plain of summer is silent and dark ! His sword is before him as a sunbeam ; terrible as the streaming meteor of night. He came toward a chief of Lochlin. He spoke to the son of the wave. “ Who is that so dark and sad, at the rock of the roaring stream ? He cannot bound over its course : How stately is the chief ! His bossy shield is on his side ; his spear, like the tree of the desert ! Youth of the dark-red hair, art thou of the foes of Fingal ? ”

“ I am a son of Lochlin,” he cries, “ strong is my arm in war. My spouse is weeping at home. Orla shall never return ! ” “ Or fights or yields the hero,” said Fingal of the noble deeds ? “ Foes do not conquer in my presence : My friends are renowned in the hall. Son of the wave, follow me, partake the feast of my shells : Pursue the deer of my desert : Be thou the friend of Fingal.” “ No : ” said the hero, “ I assist the feeble. My strength is with the weak in arms. My sword has been always unmatched, O warrior ! Let the king of Morven yield ! ” “ I never yielded, Orla ! Fingal never yielded to man. Draw thy sword, and choose thy foe. Many are my heroes ! ”

“ Does then the king refuse the fight ? ” said Orla of the dark-brown shield. “ Fingal is a match for Orla ; and he alone of all his race ! ” “ But, king of Morven, if I shall fall ; as one time the warrior must die ; raise my tomb in the midst : Let it be the greatest on Lena. Send, over the dark-blue wave, the sword of Orla to the spouse of his love ; that she may shew it to
her

her son, with tears, to kindle his soul to war." "Son of the mournful tale," said Fingal, "why dost thou awaken my tears? One day the warriors must die, and the children see their useless arms in the hall. But, Orla! thy tomb shall rise. Thy white-bosomed spouse shall weep over thy sword."

'They fought on the heath of Lena. Feeble was the arm of Orla. The sword of Fingal descended, and cleft his shield in twain. It fell and glittered on the ground, as the moon on the ruffled stream. "King of Morven," said the hero, "lift thy sword and pierce my breast. Wounded and faint from battle, my friends have left me here. The mournful tale shall come to my love, on the banks of the streamy Lota; when she is alone in the wood; and the rustling blast in the leaves!"

"No;" said the king of Morven, "I will never wound thee, Orla. On the banks of Lota let her see thee; escape from the hands of war. Let thy grey-haired father, who, perhaps, is blind with age. Let him hear the sound of thy voice, and brighten within his hall. With joy let the hero rise, and search for his son with his hands!" "But never will he find him, Fingal;" said the youth of the streamy Lota. "On Lena's heath I must die: Foreign bards shall talk of me. My broad belt covers the wound of death. I give it to the wind!"

The dark blood poured from his side, he fell pale on the heath of Lena. Fingal bent over him as he dies, and called his younger chiefs. "Oscar and Fillan, my sons, raise high the memory of Orla. Here let the dark-haired hero rest, far from the spouse of his love. Here let him rest in his narrow house, far from the sound
of

of Lota. The feeble will find his bow at home ; but will not be able to bend it. His faithful dogs howl on his hills ; his boars, which he used to pursue, rejoice. Fallen is the arm of battle ! the mighty among the valiant is low ! Exalt the voice and blow the horn, ye sons of the king of Morven ! Let us go back to Swaran, to send the night away on song. Fillan, Oscar, and Ryno, fly over the heath of Lena. Where, Ryno, art thou, young son of fame ? Thou art not wont to be the last to answer thy father's voice !"

" Ryno," said Ullin, first of bards, " is with the awful forms of his fathers. With Trathal king of shields ; with Trenmor of mighty deeds. The youth is low, the youth is pale, he lies on Lena's heath !". " Fell the swiftest in the race," said the king, " the first to bend the bow ? Thou scarce hast been known to me ! Why did young Ryno fall ? But sleep thou softly on Lena, Fingal shall soon behold thee. Soon shall my voice be heard no more, and my footsteps cease to be seen. The bards will tell of Fingal's name. The stones will talk of me. But Ryno, thou art low indeed ! Thou hast not received thy fame. Ullin, strike the harp for Ryno ; tell what the chief would have been. Farewell, thou first in every field ! No more shall I direct thy dart ! Thou that hast been so fair ! I behold thee not. Farewell." The tear is on the cheek of the king, for terrible was his son in war. His son ! that was like a beam of fire by night on a hill ; when the forests sink down in its course, and the traveller trembles at the sound ! But the winds drive it beyond the steep. It sinks from sight, and darkness prevails.

" Whose fame is in that dark-green tomb," began the king of generous shells ? " four stones with
with

with their heads of moss stand there ! They mark the narrow house of death. Near it let Ryno rest. A neighbour to the brave let him lie. Some chief of fame is here, to fly, with my son, on clouds. O Ullin ! raise the songs of old. Awake their memory in their tomb. If in the field they never fled, my son shall rest by their side. He shall rest, far distant from Morven, on Lena's resounding plains !"

" Here," said the bard of song, " here rest the first of heroes. Silent is Lamderg* in this place : Dumb is Ullin, king of swords : And who soft-smiling from her cloud, shews me her face of love ? Why, daughter, why so pale art thou, first of the maids of Cromla ? Dost thou sleep with the foes in battle, white-bosomed daughter of Tuathal ? Thou hast been the love of thousands, but Lamderg was thy love. He came to Tura's mossy towers, and striking his dark buckler, spoke : " Where is Gelchoffa, my love, the daughter of the noble Tuathal ? I left her in the hall of Tura, when I fought with great Ulfada. Return soon, O Lamderg ! she said, for here I sit in grief. Her white breast rose with sighs. Her cheek was wet with tears. But I see her not coming to meet me ; to sooth my soul after war. Silent is the hall of my joy ! I hear not the voice of the bard. Bran† does not shake his chains at the gate, glad at the coming of Lamderg. Where is Gelchoffa, my love, the mild daughter of the generous Tuathal ?"

" Lamderg !"

* *Lamh-dhearg* signifies *bloody land*. *Gelchoffa*, *white legged*. *Tuathal*, *surly*. *Ulfadda*, *long beard*. *Ferchios*, *the conqueror of men*.

† *Bran* is a common name of grey-hounds to this day. It is a custom in the north of Scotland, to give the names of the heroes mentioned in this poem to their dogs ; a proof that they are familiar to the ear, and their fame generally known.

“Lamderg!” says Ferchio son of Aidon,
 “Gelchoffa moves stately on Cromla. She and
 the maids of the bow pursued the flying deer!”
 “Ferchios!” replied the chief of Cromla, “no
 noise meets the ear of Lamderg! No sound is in
 the woods of Lena. No deer fly in my sight.
 No panting dog pursues. I see not Gelchoffa my
 love, fair as the full moon setting on the hills.
 Go, Ferchios, go to Allad*, the grey haired son
 of the rock. His dwelling is in the circle of stones.
 He may know of the bright Gelchoffa!”

“The son of Aidon went. He spoke to the
 ear of age. Allad! dweller of rocks: ‘Thou that
 tremblest alone! what saw thine eyes of age?’”
 “I saw,” answered Allad the old, “Ullin the
 son of Cairbar. He came, in darkness, from
 Cromla. He hummed a surly song, like a blast
 in a leafless wood. He entered the hall of Tura.
 “Lamderg,” he said, “most dreadful of men,
 fight or yield to Ullin.” “Lamderg,” replied
 Gelchoffa, “the son of battle is not here. He
 fights Ulfada mighty chief. He is not here, thou
 first of men! But Lamderg never yields. He
 will fight the son of Cairbar!” “Lovely art
 thou,” said terrible Ullin, “daughter of the ge-
 nerous Tuathal. I carry thee to Cairbar’s halls.
 The valiant shall have Gelchoffa. Three days I
 remain on Cromla, to wait that son of battle,
 Lamderg. On the fourth Gelchoffa is mine; if
 the mighty Lamderg flies.”

“Allad!” said the chief of Cromla, “peace
 to thy dreams in the cave. Ferchios, sound the
 VOL. I. D horn

* Allad is a druid: He is called the son of the rock, from
 his dwelling in a cave; and the circle of stones here mention-
 ed is the pale of the druidical temple. He is here consulted as
 one who had a supernatural knowledge of things; from the
 druids, no doubt, came the ridiculous notion of the second
 fight which prevailed in the highlands and isles.

horn of Lamderg, that Ullin may hear in his halls." Lamderg, like a roaring storm, ascended the hill from Tura. He hummed a furly song as he went, like the noise of a falling stream. He darkly stood upon the hill, like a cloud varying its form to the wind. He rolled a stone, the sign of war. Ullin heard in Cairbar's hall. The hero heard, with joy, his foe. He took his father's spear. A smile brightens his dark-brown cheek, as he places his sword by his side. The dagger glittered in his hand. He whistled as he went.

Gelchoffa saw the silent chief, as a wreath of mist ascending the hill. She struck her white and heaving breast; and silent, tearful, feared for Lamderg. "Cairbar, hoary chief of shells," said the maid of the tender hand, "I must bend the bow on Cromla. I see the dark-brown hinds!" She hastened up the hill. In vain! the gloomy heroes fought. Why should I tell to Selma's king how wrathful heroes fight? Fierce Ullin fell. Young Lamderg came, all pale to the daughter of generous Tuathal! "What blood, my love?" she trembling said, "what blood runs down my warrior's side?" "It is Ullin's blood," the chief replied, "thou fairer than the snow! Gelchoffa, let me rest here a little while." The mighty Lamderg died! "And sleepest thou so soon on earth, O chief of shady Tura?" Three days she mourned beside her love. The hunters found her cold. They raised this tomb above the tree. Thy son, O king of Morven, may rest here with heroes!

"And here my son shall rest," said Fingal. "The voice of their fame is in mine years. Fillan and Fergus! bring hither Orla; the pale youth of the stream of Lota! Not unequalled shall Ryno lie in earth, when Orla is by his side. Weep, ye daughters

daughters of Morven ! ye maids of the streamy Lota weep ! Like a tree they grew on the hills. They have fallen like the oak of the desert ; when it lies across a stream, and withers in the wind. Oscar ! chief of every youth ! thou seest how they have fallen. Be thou like them, on earth renowned. Like them the song of bards. Terrible were their forms in battle ; but calm was Ryno in the days of peace. He was like the bow of the shower seen far distant on the stream ; when the sun is setting on Mora ; when silence dwells on the hill of deer. Rest, youngest of my sons ! rest, O Ryno ! on Lena. We too shall be no more. Warriors one day must fall !”

Such was thy grief, thou king of swords, when Ryno lay on earth. What must the grief of Ossian be, for thou thyself art gone ! I hear not thy distant voice on Cona. My eyes perceive thee not. Often forlorn and dark I sit at thy tomb ; and feel it with my hands. When I think I hear thy voice, it is but the passing blast. Fingal has long since fallen asleep, the ruler of the war !

Then Gaul and Ossian sat with Swaran, on the soft green banks of Lubar. I touched the harp to please the king. But gloomy was his brow. He rolled his red eyes toward Lena. The hero mourned his host. I raised mine eyes to Cromla's brow. I saw the son of generous Semo. Sad and slow he retired, from his hill, towards the lonely cave of Tura. He saw Fingal victorious, and mixed his joy with grief. The sun is bright on his armour. Connal slowly strode behind. They sunk behind the hill, like two pillars of the fire of night : When winds pursue them over the mountain, and the flaming heath resounds ! Beside a stream of roaring foam his cave is in a rock. One tree bends above it. The rushing winds echo

against its sides. Here rests the chief of Erin, the son of generous Semo. His thoughts are on the battles he lost. The tear is on his cheek. He mourned the departure of his fame, that fled like the mist of Cona. O Bragela ! thou art too far remote, to cheer the soul of the hero. But let him see thy bright form in his mind : That his thoughts may return to the lonely sun-beam of his love !

Who comes with the locks of age ? It is the son of songs. “ Hail, Carril of other times ! Thy voice is like the harp in the halls of Tura. Thy words are pleasant as the shower, which falls on the sunny field. Carril of the times of old, why comest thou from the son of the generous Semo ! ”

“ Ossian, king of swords,” replied the bard, “ thou best can raise the song. Long hast thou been known to Carril, thou ruler of war ! Often have I touched the harp to lovely Evirallin. Thou too hast often joined my voice, in Branno’s hall of generous shells. And often, amidst our voices, was heard the mildest Evirallin. One day the sung of Cormac’s fall, the youth, who died for her love. I saw the tears on her cheek, and on thine, thou chief of men ! Her soul was touched for the unhappy, though she loved him not. How fair among a thousand maids, was the daughter of generous Branno ! ”

“ Bring not, Carril,” I replied, “ bring not her memory to my mind. My soul must melt at the remembrance. My eyes must have their tears. Pale in the earth is she, the softly-blushing fair of my love ! But sit thou on the heath, O bard ! and let us hear thy voice. It is pleasant as the gale of spring, that sighs on the hunter’s ear ; when he awakens from dreams of joy, and has heard the music of the spirits of the hill ! ”

F I N G A L :

A N

ANCIENT EPIC POEM.

IN SIX BOOKS.

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BOOK VI.

D 3

ARGUMENT TO BOOK VI.

Night comes on. Fingal gives a feast to his army, at which Swaran is present. The king commands Ullin his bard to give the *song of peace*; a custom always observed at the end of a war. Ullin relates the actions of Trenmor, great grandfather to Fingal, in Scandinavia, and his marriage with Inibaca, the daughter of a king of Lochlin who was ancestor to Swaran; which consideration, together with his being brother to Agandecca, with whom Fingal was in love in his youth, induced the king to release him, and permit him to return, with the remains of his army, into Lochlin, upon his promise of never returning to Ireland in a hostile manner. The night is spent in settling Swaran's departure, in songs of bards, and in a conversation in which the story of Grumal is introduced by Fingal. Morning comes. Swaran departs. Fingal goes on a hunting party, and finding Cuthullin in the cave of Tura, comforts him, and sets sail, the next day, for Scotland; which concludes the poem.

BOOK SIXTH.

F I N G A L:

A N

ANCIENT EPIC POEM.

THE clouds of night come rolling down. Darknefs rests on the steeps of Cromla. The stars of the north arise over the rolling of Erin's waves: They show their heads of fire, through the flying mist of heaven. A distant wind roars in the wood. Silent and dark is the plain of death! Still on the dusky Lena arose in my ears the voice of Carril. He sung of the friends of our youth; the days of former years; when we met on the banks of Lego: When we sent round the joy of the shell. Cromla, answered to his voice. The ghosts of those he sung came in their rustling winds. They were seen to bend with joy, towards the sound of their praise!

Be thy soul blest, O Carril! in the midst of thy eddying winds. O that thou wouldst come to my hall, when I am alone by night! And thou dost come, my friend. I hear often thy light hand on my harp; when it hangs, on the distant wall, and the feeble sound touches my ear. Why dost thou not speak to me in my grief, and tell when I shall behold my friends?

But thou passest away in thy murmuring blast ;
the wind whistles thro' the grey hair of Ossian !

Now, on the side of Mora, the heroes gathered
to the feast. A thousand aged oaks are burning
to the wind. The strength * of the shells goes
round. The souls of warriors brighten with joy.
But the king of Lochlin is silent. Sorrow red-
dens in the eyes of his pride. He often turned
towards Lena. He remembered that he fell.
Fingal leaned on the shield of his fathers. His
grey locks slowly waved on the wind, and glit-
tered to the beam of night. He saw the grief
of Swaran, and spoke to the first of bards.

“ Raise, Ullin, raise the song of peace O
sooth my soul from war ! Let mine ear forget, in
the sound, the dismal noise of arms. Let a hun-
dred harps be near to gladden the king of Loch-
lin. He must depart from us with joy. None
ever went sad from Fingal. Oscar ! the lightning
of my sword is against the strong in fight. Peaceful
it lies by my side when warriors yield in war.”

“ Trenmor †,” said the mouth of songs,
“ lived in the days of other years. He bounded
over the waves of the north : Companion of the
storm ! The high rocks of the land of Lochlin ;
its groves of murmuring sounds appeared to the
hero through mist : He bound his white-bosomed
sails. Trenmor pursued the boar, that roared
through the woods of Gormal. Many had fled
froma

* The ancient Celtæ brewed beer, and they were no stran-
gers to mead. Several ancient poems mention wax lights and
wine as common in the halls of Fingal. The Caledonians,
in their frequent incursions to the province, might become
acquainted with those conveniencies of life, and introduce
them into their own country, among the booty which they
carried from South Britain.

† Trenmor was great grandfather to Fingal. The story
is introduced to facilitate the dismissal of Swaran.

from its presence : But it rolled in death on the spear of Trenmor. Three chiefs, who beheld the deed, told of the mighty stranger. They told that he stood, like a pillar of fire, in the bright arms of his valour. The king of Lochlin prepared the feast. He called the blooming Trenmor. Three days he feasted at Gormal's windy towers ; and received his choice in the combat. The land of Lochlin had no hero, that yielded not to Trenmor. The shell of joy went round with songs, in praise of the king of Morven. He that came over the waves, the first of mighty men !

Now when the fourth grey morn arose, the hero launched his ship. He walked along the silent shore, and called for the rushing wind : For loud and distant he heard the blast murmuring behind the groves. Covered over with arms of steel, a son of the woody Gormal appeared. Red was his cheek and fair his hair. His skin like the snow of Morven. Mild rolled his blue and smiling eye, when he spoke to the king of swords.

“ STAY, Trenmor, stay thou first of men, thou hast not conquered Lonval's son. My sword has often met the brave. The wise shun the strength of my bow.” “ Thou fair-haired youth,” Trenmor replied, “ I will not fight with Lonval's son. Thine arm is feeble, sun-beam of youth ! Retire to Gormal's dark-brown hinds.” “ But I will retire,” replied the youth, “ with the sword of Trenmor ; and exult in the sound of my fame. The virgins shall gather with smiles, around him who conquered mighty Trenmor. They shall sigh with the sighs of love, and admire the length of thy spear ; when I shall carry it among thousands ; when I lift the glittering point to the sun.”

“Thou shalt never carry my spear,” said the angry king of Morven. “Thy mother shall find thee pale on the shore; and, looking over the dark-blue deep, see the sails of him that slew her son!” “I will not lift the spear,” replied the youth, “my arm is not strong with years. But, with the feathered dart, I have learned to pierce a distant foe. Throw down the heavy mail of steel. Trenmor is covered from death. I first, will lay my mail on earth. Throw now thy dart, thou king of Morven!” He saw the heaving of her breast. It was the sister of the king. She had seen him in the hall: and loved his face of youth. The spear dropt from the hand of Trenmor: he bent his red cheek to the ground. She was to him a beam of light that meets the sons of the cave; when they revisit the fields of the sun, and bend their aching eyes!

“Chief of the windy Morven,” begun the maid of the arms of snow, “let me rest in thy bounding ship, far from the love of Corlo. For he, like the thunder of the desert, is terrible to Inibaca. He loves me in the gloom of pride. He shakes ten thousand spears!” “Rest thou in peace,” said the mighty Trenmor, “rest behind the shield of my fathers. I will not fly from the chief, though he shakes ten thousand spears!” Three days he waited on the shore. He sent his horn abroad. He called Corlo to battle, from all his echoing hills. But Corlo came not to battle. The king of Lochlin descends from his hall. He feasted on the roaring shore. He gave the maid to Trenmor!

“King of Lochlin,” said Fingal, “thy blood flows in the veins of thy foe. Our fathers met in battle, because they loved the strife of spears. But often did they feast in the hall: and send
round

round the joy of the shell. Let thy face brighten with gladness, and thine ear delight in the harp. Dreadful as the storm of thine ocean, thou hast poured thy valour forth ; thy voice has been like the voice of thousands when they engage in war. Raise, to-morrow, raise thy white sails to the wind, thou brother of Agandecca ! Bright as the beam of noon, she comes on my mournful soul. I have seen thy tears for the fair one. I spared thee in the halls of Starno ; when my sword was red with slaughter ; when my eye was full of tears for the maid. Or dost thou chuse the fight ? The combat which thy fathers gave to Trenmor is thine ! that thou mayest depart renowned, like the sun setting in the west !”

“ King of the race of Morven,” said the chief of resounding Lochlin ! “ never will Swaran fight with thee, first of a thousand heroes ! I have seen thee in the halls of Starno : few were thy years beyond my own. When shall I, I said to my soul, lift the spear like the noble Fingal ? We have fought heretofore, O warrior, on the side of the shaggy Malmor ; after my waves had carried me to thy halls, and the feast of a thousand shells was spread. Let the bards send his name who overcame to future years, for noble was the strife of Malmor ! But many of the ships of Lochlin have lost their youths on Lena. Take these, thou king of Morven, and be the friend of Swaran ! When thy sons shall come to Gormal, the feast of shells shall be spread, and the combat offered on the vale.”

“ Nor ship,” replied the king, “ shall Fingal take, nor land of many hills. The desert is enough to me, with all its deer and woods. Rise on thy waves again, thou noble friend of Agandecca ! Spread thy white sails to the beam of the morning ;

morning ; return to the echoing hills of Gormal.” “ Bleft be thy foul, thou king of fhells,” faid Swaran of the dark-brown fhield. “ In peace thou art the gale of fpring. In war the mountain-ftorm. Take now my hand in friendship, king of echoing Selma ! Let thy bards mourn thofe who fell. Let Erin give the fons of Lochlin to earth. Raife high the moffy ftones of their fame : that the children of the north hereafter may behold the place where their fathers fought. The hunter may fay, when he leans on a moffy tomb, here Fingal and Swaran fought, the heroes of other years. Thus hereafter fhall he fay, and our fame fhall laft for ever !”

“ Swaran,” faid the king of hills, “ to-day our fame is greateft. We fhall pafs away like a dream. No found will remain in our fields of war. Our tombs will be loft in the heath. The hunter fhall not know the place of our reft. Our names may be heard in fong. What avails it, when our ftrength hath ceafed ? O Offian, Carril, and Ullin ! you know of heroes that are no more. Give us the fong of other years. Let the night pafs away on the found, and morning return with joy.”

We gave the fong to the kings. An hundred harps mixed their found with our voice. The face of Swaran brightened, like the full moon of heaven ; when the clouds vanifh away, and leave her calm and broad, in the midft of the fky !

“ Where, Carril,” faid the great Eingal, “ Carril of other times ! Where is the fon of Semo, the king of the ifle of mift ? has he retired, like the meteor of death, to the dreary cave of Tura ?” “ Cuthullin,” faid Carril of other times, “ lies in the dreary cave of Tura. His hand is on the fword of his ftrength. His thoughts

thoughts on the battles he lost. Mournful is the king of spears; till now he conquered in war. He sends his sword to rest on the side of Fingal: For, like the storm of the desert, thou hast scattered all his foes. Take, O Fingal! the sword of the hero. His fame is departed like mist, when it flies, before the rustling wind, along the brightening vale."

"No:" replied the king, "Fingal shall never take his sword. His arm is mighty in war: His fame shall never fail. Many have been overcome in battle; whose renown arose from their fall. O Swaran! king of refounding woods, give all thy grief away. The vanquished, if brave, are renowned. They are like the sun in a cloud, when he hides his face in the south, but looks again on the hills of grass!

"Grumal was a chief of Cona. He fought the battle on every coast. His soul rejoiced in blood. His ear in the din of arms. He poured his warriors on Craca; Craca's king met him from his grove; for then, within the circle of Brumo*, he spoke to the stone of power. Fierce was the battle of the heroes, for the maid of the breast of snow. The fame of the daughter of Craca, had reached Grumal at the streams of Cona: He vowed to have the white-bosomed maid, or die on echoing Craca. Three days they strove together, and Grumal on the fourth was bound. Far from his friends they placed him, in the horrid circle of Brumo; where often, they said, the ghosts of the dead howled round the stone of their fear. But he afterwards shone, like a pillar of the light of heaven. They fell

* This passage alludes to the religion of the king of Craca.

fell by his mighty hand. Grumal had all his fame !”

“ Raife, ye bards of other times,” continued the great Fingal, “ raife high the praife of heroes ; that my foul may settle on their fame ; that the mind of Swaran may ceafe to be fad.” They lay in the heath of Mora. The dark winds ruffled over the chiefs. An hundred voices, at once, arofe : A hundred harps were ftrung. They fung of other times ; the mighty chiefs of former years ! When now fhall I hear the bard ? When rejoice at the fame of my fathers ? The harp is not ftrung on Morven. The voice of mufic afcends not on Cona. Dead, with the mighty, is the bard. Fame is in the defart no more.

Morning trembles with the beam of the eaft ; it glimmers on Cromla’s fide. Over Lena is heard the horn of Swaran. The fons of the ocean gather around. Silent and fad they rife on the wave. The blaft of Erin is behind their fails. White, as the mift of Morven, they float along the fea. “ Call,” faid Fingal, “ call my dogs, the long-bounding fons of the chace. Call white-breafte’d Bran, and the furly ftrength of Luath ! Fillan, and Ryno ! but he is not here ! My fon refts on the bed of death. Fillan and Fergus ! blow the horn, that the joy of the chace may arife ; that the deer of Cromla may hear and ftart at the lake of roes.”

The fhriU found freads along the wood. The fons of heathy Cromla arife. A thoufand dogs fly off at once, grey-bounding through the heath. A deer fell by every dog ; three by the white-breafte’d Bran. He brought them, in their flight, to Fingal, that the joy of the king might be great ! One deer fell at the tomb of Ryno. The grief of Fingal returned. He faw how peaceful

peaceful lay the stone of him, who was the first at the chace ! “ No more shalt thou rise, O my son ! to partake of the feast of Cromla. Soon will thy tomb be hid, and the grass grow rank on thy grave. The sons of the feeble shall pass along. They shall not know where the mighty lie.

“ Ossian and Fillan, sons of my strength ! Gaul, chief of the blue steel of war ! let us ascend the hill to the cave of Tura. Let us find the chief of the battles of Erin. Are these the walls of Tura ? Grey and lonely they rise on the heath. The chief of shells is sad, and the halls are silent and lonely. Come, let us find Cuthullin, and give him all our joy. But is that Cuthullin, O Fillan, or a pillar of smoke on the heath ? The wind of Cromla is on my eyes. I distinguish not my friend.”

“ Fingal !” replied the youth, it is the son of Semo ! Gloomy and sad is the hero ! His hand is on his sword. Hail to the son of battle, breaker of the shields !” “ Hail to thee,” replied Cuthullin, “ hail to all the sons of Morven ! Delightful is thy presence, O Fingal ! it is the sun on Cromla ; when the hunter mourns his absence for a season, and sees him between the clouds. Thy sons are like stars that attend thy course. They give light in the night. It is not thus thou hast seen me, O Fingal ! returning from the wars of thy land : When the kings of the world* had fled, and joy returned to the hill of hinds !” “ Many are thy words, Cuthullin,”

* This is the only passage in the poem wherein the wars of Fingal against the Romans are alluded to : The Roman emperor is distinguished, in old composition, by the title of *king of the world*.

lin," said Connan* of small renown. "Thy words are many, son of Semo, but where are thy deeds in arms? Why did we come, over ocean, to aid thy feeble sword? Thou flyest to thy cave of grief, and Connan fights thy battles. Resign to me these arms of light. Yield them, thou chief of Erin." "No hero," replied the chief, "ever fought the arms of Cuthullin! and had a thousand heroes fought them, it were in vain, thou gloomy youth! I fled not to the cave of grief, till Erin failed at her streams."

"Youth of the feeble arm," said Fingal, "Connan, cease thy words! Cuthullin is renowned in battle; terrible over the world. Often have I heard thy fame, thou stormy chief of Inis-fail. Spread now thy white sails for the isle of mist. See Bragela leaning on her rock. Her tender eye is in tears; the winds lift her long hair from her heaving breast. She listens to the breeze of night, to hear the voice of thy rowers†; to hear the song of the sea! The sound of thy distant harp!"

"Long shall she listen in vain. Cuthullin shall never return! How can I behold Bragela, to raise the sigh of her breast? Fingal, I was always victorious, in battles of other spears!" "And hereafter thou shalt be victorious," said Fingal of generous shells. "The fame of Cuthullin shall grow, like the branchy tree of Cromla. Many battles await thee, O chief! Many shall be the wounds of thy hand! Bring hither,

* Connan was of the family of Morni. He is mentioned in several other poems, and always appears with the same character. The poet passed him over in silence till now, and his behaviour here deserves no better usage.

† The practice of singing when they row, is universal among the inhabitants of the northwest coast of Scotland and the isles. It deceives time, and inspirits the rowers.

hither, Oscar, the deer! Prepare the feast of shells. Let our souls rejoice after danger, and our friends delight in our presence!"

We sat. We feasted. We sung. The soul of Cuthullin rose. The strength of his arm returned. Gladness brightened along his face. Ullin gave the song; Carril raised the voice. I joined the bards, and sung of battles of the spear. Battles! where I often fought. Now I fight no more! The fame of my former deeds is ceased. I sit forlorn at the tombs of my friends!

Thus the night passed away in song. We brought back the morning with joy. Fingal arose on the heath, and took his glittering spear. He moved first toward the plains of Lena. We followed in all our arms.

"Spread the sail," said the king, "seize the winds as they pour from Lena." We rose on the wave with songs. We rushed, with joy, through the foam of the deep.

COMALA:

A

DRAMATIC POEM.

ARGUMENT.

This poem is valuable, on account of the light it throws on the antiquity of Ossian's compositions. The Caracul mentioned here is the same with Caracalla the son of Severus, who, in the year 211, commanded an expedition against the Caledonians. The variety of the measure shews, that the poem was originally set to music, and perhaps presented before the chiefs upon solemn occasions. Tradition has handed down the story more complete than it is in the poem. "Comala, the daughter of Sarno king of Inistore, or Orkney islands, fell in love with Fingal the son of Comhal at a feast, to which her father had invited him, [Fingal, B. III.] upon his return from Lochlin, after the death of Agandecca. Her passion was so violent, that she followed him, disguised like a youth, who wanted to be employed in his wars. She was soon discovered by Hidallan the son of Lamor, one of Fingal's heroes, whose love she had slighted some time before. Her romantic passion and beauty recommended her so much to the king, that he had resolved to make her his wife, when news was brought him of Caracul's expedition. He marched to stop the progress of the enemy, and Comala attended him. He left her on a hill, within sight of Caracul's army, when he himself went to battle, having previously promised, if he survived, to return that night." The sequel of the story may be gathered from the poem itself.

COMALA:

A

DRAMATIC POEM.

THE PERSONS.

FINGAL.
HIDALLAN.
COMALA.

MELILCOMA, } daughters
DERSAGRENA, } of Morni.
BARDS.

DERSAGRENA.

THE chase is over. No noise on Ardven but the torrent's roar! Daughter of Morni, come from Crona's banks. Lay down the bow and take the harp. Let the night come on with songs, let our joy be great on Ardven.

MELILCOMA *. Night comes on apace, thou blue-eyed maid! Grey night grows dim along the plain. I saw a deer at Crona's stream; a mossy bank he seemed through the gloom, but soon he bounded away. A meteor played round his branching horns! The awful faces † of other times looked from the clouds of Crona!

DERSA-

* Melilcoma,—*soft-rolling eye.*

† *Apparent dire facies, inimicaque Trojæ
Numina magna deum.*

VIRG.

—dreadful sounds I hear,
And the dire form of hostile gods appear.

DRYDEN.

DESAGRENA *. These are the signs of Fingal's death. The king of shields is fallen! and Caracul prevails. Rise, Comala †, from thy rock; daughter of Sarno, rise in tears! The youth of thy love is low; his ghost is on our hills.

MELILCOMA. There Comala sits forlorn! two grey dogs near shake their rough ears, and catch the flying breeze. Her red cheek rests upon her arm, the mountain wind is in her hair. She turns her blue eyes toward the fields of his promise. Where art thou, O Fingal! the night is gathering around.

COMALA. O Carun ‡ of the streams! Why do I behold thy waters rolling in blood? Has the noise of the battle been heard; and sleeps the king of Morven? Rise, moon, thou daughter of the sky? Look from between thy clouds, rise that I may behold the gleam of his steel, on the field of his promise. Or rather let the meteor, that lights our fathers through the night, come, with its red beam, to shew me the way to my fallen hero. Who will defend me from sorrow? Who from the love of Hidallan? Long shall Comala look before she can behold Fingal in the midst of his host; bright as the coming forth of the morning, in the cloud of an early shower.

HIDAL-

* Desagrena, the brightness of a sun-beam.

† Comala, the maid of the pleasant brow.

‡ Carun or Cara'on, a winding river.—This river retains till the name of Carron, and falls into the Forth some miles to the north of Falkirk.

——— *Gentesque alias cum pelleret armis
Sedibus, aut viclas vilem servaret in usum
Servitii, hic contenta suos defendere fines
Roma securigeris prætendit mania Scotis:
Hic spe progressus posita, Caronis ad undam
Terminus Ausonii signat divortia regni.*

BUCHANAN.

HIDALLAN *. Dwell thou mist of gloomy Crona, dwell on the path of the king ! Hide his steps from mine eyes, let me remember my friend no more. The bands of battle are scattered, no crowding tread is round the noise of his steel. O Carun ! roll thy streams of blood, the chief of the people is low.

COMALA. Who fell on Carun's sounding banks, son of the cloudy night ? Was he white as the snow of Ardven ? Blooming as the bow of the shower ? Was his hair like the mist of the hill, soft and curling in the day of the sun ? Was he like the thunder of heaven in battle ? Fleet as the roe of the desert ?

HIDALLAN. O that I might behold his love, fair leaning from her rock ! Her red eye dim in tears, her blushing cheek half hid in her locks ! Blow, O gentle breeze ! Lift thou the heavy locks of the maid, that I may behold her white arm, her lovely cheek in her grief.

COMALA. And is the son of Comhal fallen, chief of the mournful tale ? The thunder rolls on the hill ! The lightning flies on wings of fire ! They frighten not Comala ; for Fingal is low. Say, chief of the mournful tale, fell the breaker of the shields ?

HIDALLAN. The nations are scattered on their hills ! They shall hear the voice of the king no more.

COMALA. Confusion pursue thee over thy plains ! Ruin overtake thee, thou king of the world !

* Hidallan was sent by Fingal, to give notice to Comala of his return ; he, to revenge himself on her for slighting his love some time before, told her that the king was killed in battle. He even pretended, that he carried his body from the field to be buried in her presence ; and this circumstance makes it probable that the poem was presented of old.

world! Few be thy steps to thy grave; and let one virgin mourn thee! Let her be like Comala, tearful in the days of her youth! Why hast thou told me, Hidallan, that my hero fell? I might have hoped a little while his return; I might have thought I saw him on a distant rock; a tree might have deceived me with his appearance; the wind of the hill might have been the sound of his horn in mine ear. O that I were on the banks of Carun! That my tears might be warm on his cheek!

HIDALLAN. He lies not on the banks of Carun; on Ardven heroes raise his tomb. Look on them, O moon! from thy clouds; be thy beam bright on his breast, that Comala may behold him in the light of his armour!

COMALA. Stop, ye sons of the grave, till I behold my love! He left me at the chace alone. I knew not that he went to war. He said he would return with the night; the king of Morven is returned! Why didst thou not tell me that he would fall, O trembling dweller of the rock*! Thou sawest him in the blood of his youth; but thou didst not tell Comala!

MELILCOMA. What sound is that on Ardven? Who is that bright in the vale? Who comes like the strength of rivers, when their crowded waters glitter to the moon?

COMALA. Who is it but the foe of Comala, the son of the king of the world! Ghost of Fingal! do thou, from thy cloud, direct Comala's bow. Let him fall like the hart of the desert. It is
Fingal

* By the dweller of the rock she means a druid. It is probable that some of the order of the druids remained as late as the beginning of the reign of Fingal; and that Comala had consulted one of them concerning the event of the war with Caracul.

Fingal in the crowd of his ghosts. Why dost thou come, my love, to frighten and please my soul?

FINGAL. Raise, ye bards, the song; raise the wars of the streamy Carun! Caracul has fled from our arms along the fields of his pride. He sets far distant like a meteor, that incloses a spirit of night, when the winds drive it over the heath, and the dark woods are gleaming around. I heard a voice, or was it the breeze of my hills? Is it the huntress of Ardven, the white-handed daughter of Sarno? Look from thy rocks, my love; let me hear the voice of Comala!

COMALA. Take me to the cave of thy rest, O lovely son of death!

FINGAL. Come to the cave of my rest. The storm is past, the sun is on our fields. Come to the cave of my rest, huntress of echoing Ardven!

COMALA. He is returned with his fame! I feel the right hand of his wars! But I must rest beside the rock till my soul returns from my fear! O let the harp be near! raise the song, ye daughters of Morni!

DERSAGRENA. Comala has slain three deer on Ardven, the fire ascends on the rock; go to the feast of Comala, king of the woody Morven!

FINGAL. Raise, ye sons of song, the wars of the streamy Carun; that my white-handed maid may rejoice: while I behold the feast of my love.

BARDS. Roll, streamy Carun; roll in joy, the sons of battle fled! The steed is not seen on

our fields; the wings * of their pride spread in other lands. The sun will now rise in peace, and the shadows descend in joy. The voice of the chace will be heard; the shields hang in the hall. Our delight will be in the war of the ocean, our hands shall grow red in the blood of Lochlin. Roll, streamy Carun, roll in joy, the sons of battle fled!

MELILCOMA. Descend, ye light mists from high! Ye moon-beams, lift her soul! Pale lies the maid at the rock! Comala is no more!

FINGAL. Is the daughter of Sarno dead; the white-bosomed maid of my love? Meet me, Comala, on my heaths, when I sit alone at the streams of my hills!

HIDALLAN. Ceased the voice of the huntress of Ardven? Why did I trouble the soul of the maid? When shall I see thee, with joy, in the chace of the dark-brown hinds?

FINGAL. Youth of the gloomy brow! no more shalt thou feast in my halls. Thou shalt not pursue my chace, my foes shall not fall by thy sword †. Lead me to the place of her rest that I may behold her beauty. Pale she lies at the rock, the cold winds lift her hair. Her bow-string sounds in the blast, her arrow was broken in her fall. Raise the praise of the daughter of Sarno! give her name to the winds of heaven!

BARDS. See! meteors gleam around the maid! See! moon-beams lift her soul! Around her, from their clouds, bend the awful faces of her fathers; Sarno ‡ of the gloomy brow! the red-

* Perhaps the poet alludes to the Roman eagle.

† The sequel of the story of Hidallan is introduced in another poem.

‡ Sarno the father of Comala died soon after the flight of his daughter. Fidallan was the first king that reigned in Inistore.

red-rolling eyes of Fidallan ! When shall thy white hand arise ; When shall thy voice be heard on our rocks ? The maids shall seek thee on the heath, but they shall not find thee. Thou shalt come, at times, to their dreams, to settle peace in their soul. Thy voice shall remain in their ears, they shall think with joy on the dreams of their rest. Meteors gleam around the maid, and moon-beams lift her soul !

THE
WAR OF CAROS:
A
POEM.

E 3

ARGUMENT.

Caros is probably the noted usurper Carausius, by birth a Menapian, who assumed the purple in the year 284: And, seizing on Britain, defeated the Emperor Maximian Herculus in several naval engagements, which gives propriety to his being called in this poem *the king of ships*. He repaired Agricola's wall, in order to obstruct the incursions of the Caledonians; and when he was employed in that work, it appears he was attacked by a party under the command of Oskar the son of Ossian. This battle is the foundation of the present poem, which is addressed to Malvina the daughter of Toscar.

T H E

WAR OF CAROS:

A

P O E M.

BRING, daughter of Toscar! bring the harp! the light of the song rises in Ossian's soul! It is like the field, when darkness covers the hills around, and the shadow grows slowly on the plain of the sun. I behold my son, O Malvina! near the mossy rock of Crona*. But it is the mist of the desert, tinged with the beam of the west! Lovely is the mist that assumes the form of Oscar! turn from it, ye winds, when ye roar on the side of Ardden.

Who comes towards my son, with the murmur of a song? His staff is in his hand, his grey hair loose on the wind. Surly joy lightens his face. He often looks back to Caros. It is Ryno† of songs, he that went to view the foe. "What does Caros king of ships?" said the son of the now mournful

E 4

Ossian,

* Crona is the name of a small stream which runs into the Carron.

† Ryno is often mentioned in the ancient poetry. He seems to have been a Bard of the first rank in the days of Fingal.

Ossian, "spreads he the wings * of his pride, bard of the times of old!" "He spreads them, Oscar," replied the bard, "but it is behind his gathered heap †. He looks over his stones with fear. He beholds thee terrible, as the ghost of night, that rolls the wave to his ships!"

"Go, thou first of my bards!" says Oscar, "take the spear of Fingal. Fix a flame on its point, shake it to the winds of heaven. Bid him, in songs, to advance, and leave the rolling of his wave. Tell to Caros that I long for battle; that my bow is weary of the chace of Cona. Tell him the mighty are not here; and that my arm is young."

He went with the murmur of songs. Oscar reared his voice on high. It reached his heroes on Ardven, like the noise of a cave; when the sea of Togorma rolls before it; and its trees meet the roaring winds. They gather round my son like the streams of the hill; when, after rain, they roll in the pride of their course. Ryno came to the mighty Caros. He struck his flaming spear. Come to the battle of Oscar, O thou that fittest on the rolling of waves! Fingal is distant far; he hears the songs of bards in Morven: The wind of his hall is in his hair. His terrible spear is at his side; his shield that is like the darkened moon! Come to the battle of Oscar; the hero is alone!

He came not over the streamy Carun ‡. The bard returned with his song. Grey night grows dim on Crona. The feast of shells is spread. A hundred oaks burn to the wind; faint light gleams over the heath. The ghosts of Ardven pass

* The Roman eagle.

† Agricola's wall, which Carausius repaired.

‡ The river Carron.

pass through the beam, and shew their dim and distant forms. Comala * is half unseen on her meteor; Hidallan is fullen and dim, like the darkened moon behind the mist of night.

“Why art thou sad?” said Ryno; for he alone beheld the chief. “Why art thou sad, Hidallan! hast thou not received thy fame? The songs of Ossian have been heard; thy ghost has brightened in wind, when thou didst bend from thy cloud, to hear the song of Morven’s bard!” “And do thine eyes,” said Oscar, “behold the chief, like the dim meteor of night? Say, Ryno, say, how fell Hidallan, the renowned in the days of my fathers? His name remains on the rocks of Cona. I have often seen the streams of his hills!”

Fingal, replied the bard, drove Hidallan from his wars. The king’s soul was sad for Comala, and his eyes could not behold the chief. Lonely, sad along the heath, he slowly moved, with silent steps. His arms hang disordered on his side. His hair flies loose from his brow. The tear is in his down-cast eyes; a sigh half-silent in his breast! Three days he strayed unseen, alone, before he came to Lamor’s halls: the mossy halls of his fathers, at the stream of Balva†. There Lamor sat alone beneath a tree; for he had sent his people with Hidallan to war. The stream ran at his feet,

E 5

his

* This is the scene of Comala’s death, which is the subject of the dramatic poem. The poet mentions her in this place, in order to introduce the sequel of Hidallan’s story, who, on account of her death, had been expelled from the wars of Fingal.

† This is perhaps that small stream, still retaining the name of Balva, which runs through the romantic valley of Glentivar in Stirlingshire. Balva signifies a *silent stream*; and Glentivar *the sequestered vale*.

his grey head rested on his staff. Sightless are his aged eyes. He hums the song of other times. The noise of Hidallan's feet came to his ear : He knew the tread of his son.

“ Is the son of Lamor returned ; or is it the sound of his ghost ? Hast thou fallen on the banks of Carun, son of the aged Lamor ? Or, if I hear the sound of Hidallan's feet ; where are the mighty in the war ? where are my people, Hidallan ! that were wont to return with their echoing shields ? Have they fallen on the banks of Carun ? ”

No : ” replied the fighting youth, “ the people of Lamor live. They are renowned in war, my father ! but Hidallan is renowned no more. I must sit alone on the banks of Balva, when the roar of the battle grows.”

“ But thy fathers never sat alone,” replied the rising pride of Lamor. “ They never sat alone on the banks of Balva, when the roar of battle arose. Dost thou not behold that tomb ? My eyes discern it not ; there rests the noble Garmállon, who never fled from war ! Come, thou renowned in battle, he says, come to thy father's tomb. How am I renowned, Garmállon ? my son has fled from war !

“ King of the streamy Balva ! ” said Hidallan with a sigh, “ why dost thou torment my soul ? Lamor, I never fled. Fingal was sad for Comala ; he denied his wars to Hidallan. Go to the grey streams of thy land, he said ; moulder like a leafless oak, which the winds have bent over Balva, never more to grow ! ”

“ And must I hear,” Lamor replied, “ the lonely tread of Hidallan's feet ? When thousands are renowned in battle, shall he bend over my grey streams ? Spirit of the noble Garmállon !

carry

carry Lamor to his place ; his eyes are dark ; his soul is sad ; his son has lost his fame !”

“ Where,” said the youth, “ shall I search for fame to gladden the soul of Lamor ? From whence shall I return with renown, that the sound of my arms may be pleasant in his ear ? If I go to the chace of hinds, my name will not be heard. Lamor will not feel my dogs, with his hands, glad at my arrival from the hill. He will not inquire of his mountains, or of the dark-brown deer of his desarts !”

“ I must fall,” said Lamor, “ like a leafless oak : it grew on a rock ! it was overturned by the winds ! My ghost will be seen on my hills, mournful for my young Hidallan. Will not ye, ye mists ! as ye rise, hide him from my sight ? My son ! go to Lamor’s hall : there the arms of our fathers hang. Bring the sword of Garmállon ; he took it from a foe !”

He went and brought the sword with all its studded thongs. He gave it to his father. The grey-haired hero felt the point with his hand.

“ My son ! lead me to Garmállon’s tomb : it rises beside that rustling tree. The long grass is withered ; I hear the breezes whistling there. A little fountain murmurs near, and sends its water to Balva. There let me rest ; it is noon : the sun is on our fields !”

He led him to Garmállon’s tomb. Lamor pierced the side of his son. They sleep together : their ancient halls moulder away. Ghosts are seen there at noon : the valley is silent, and the people shun the place of Lamor.

“ Mournful is thy tale,” said Oscar, “ son of the times of old ! My soul sighs for Hidallan ; he fell in the days of his youth. He flies on the blast of the desert, his wandering is in a foreign land.

land. Sons of the echoing Morven! draw near to the foes of Fingal. Send the night away in songs; watch the strength of Caros. Oscar goes to the people of other times; to the shades of silent Ardven; where his fathers sit dim in their clouds, and behold the future war. And art thou there, Hidallan, like a half-extinguished meteor? Come to my fight, in thy sorrow, chief of the winding Balva!"

The heroes move with their songs. Oscar slowly ascends the hill. The meteors of night set on the heath before him. A distant torrent faintly roars. Unfrequent blasts rush through aged oaks. The half-enlightened moon sinks dim and red behind her hill. Feeble voices are heard on the heath. Oscar drew his sword!

"Come," said the hero, "O ye ghosts of my fathers! ye that fought against the kings of the world! Tell me the deeds of future times; and your converse in your caves; when you talk together, and behold your sons in the fields of the brave."

Trenmor came from his hill, at the voice of his mighty son. A cloud, like the steed of the stranger, supported his airy limbs. His robe is of the mist of Lano, that brings death to the people. His sword is a green meteor: half-extinguished. His face is without form, and dark. He sighed thrice over the hero: thrice the winds of night roared around! Many were his words to Oscar; but they only came by halves to our ears: they were dark as the tales of other times, before the light of the song arose. He slowly vanished, like a mist that melts on the sunny hill. It was then, O daughter of Toscar! my son began first to be sad. He foresaw the fall of his race. At times,
he

he was thoughtful and dark ; like the sun when he carries a cloud on his face, but again he looks forth from his darkness on the green hills of Cona.

Oscar passed the night among his fathers, grey morning met him on Carun's banks. A green vale surrounded a tomb which arose in the times of old. Little hills lift their head at a distance ; and stretch their old trees to the wind. The warriors of Caros sat there, for they had passed the stream by night. They appeared, like the trunks of aged pines, to the pale light of the morning. Oscar stood at the tomb, and raised thrice his terrible voice. The rocking hills echoed around ; the starting roes bounded away : And the trembling ghosts of the dead fled, shrieking on their clouds. So terrible was the voice of my son, when he called his friends !

A thousand spears arose around ; the people of Caros rose. Why daughter of Toscar, why that tear ? My son, though alone, is brave. Oscar is like a beam of the sky ; he turns around and the people fall. His hand is the arm of a ghost, when he stretches it from a cloud ; the rest of his thin form is unseen ; but the people die in the vale ! My son beheld the approach of the foe ; he stood in the silent darkness of his strength. " Am I alone," said Oscar, " in the midst of a thousand foes ? Many a spear is there ! Many a darkly-rolling eye ! Shall I fly to Ardven ? But did my fathers ever fly ? The mark of their arm is in a thousand battles. Oscar too shall be renowned ! Come, ye dim ghosts of my fathers, and behold my deeds in war ! I may fall ; but I will be renowned like the race of the echoing Morven." He stood, growing in his place, like a flood in a narrow vale ! The battle came, but they fell : Bloody was the sword of Oscar :

The

The noise reached his people at Crona; they came like a hundred streams. The warriors of Caros fled; Oscar remained like a rock left by the ebbing sea. Now dark and deep, with all his steeds, Caros rolled his might along: The little streams are lost in his course; the earth is rocking round. Battle spreads from wing to wing: Ten thousand swords gleam at once in the sky. But why should Ossian sing of battles? For never more shall my steel shine in war. I remember the days of my youth with grief; when I feel the weakness of my arm. Happy are they who fell in their youth, in the midst of their renown! They have not beheld the tombs of their friends; or failed to bend the bow of their strength. Happy art thou, O Oscar, in the midst of thy rushing blast. Thou often goest to the fields of thy fame, where Caros fled from thy lifted sword.

Darkness comes on my soul, O fair daughter of Toscar: I behold not the form of my son at Carun; nor the figure of Oscar on Crona. The rustling winds have carried him far away; and the heart of his father is sad. But lead me, O Malvina! to the fount of my woods; to the roar of my mountain streams. Let the chase be heard on Cona; let me think on the days of other years. And bring me the harp, O maid! that I may touch it, when the light of my soul shall arise. Be thou near, to learn the song; future times shall hear of me! The sons of the feeble hereafter will lift the voice on Cona; and, looking up to the rocks, say, "Here Ossian dwelt." They shall admire the chiefs of old, the race that are no more! while we ride on our clouds, Malvina! on the wings of the roaring winds. Our voices shall be heard, at times, in the desert; we shall sing on the breeze of the rock.

T H E

WAR OF INIS-THONA:

A

P O E M.

ARGUMENT.

Reflections on the poet's youth. An apostrophe to Selma. Oscar obtains leave to go to Inis-thona, an island of Scandinavia. The mournful story of Argon and Ruro, the two sons of the king of Inis-thona. Oscar revenges their death, and returns in triumph to Selma. A soliloquy by the poet himself.

T H E

WAR OF INIS-THONA:

A

P O E M.

OUR youth is like the dream of the hunter on the hill of heath. He sleeps in the mild beams of the sun; he awakes amidst a storm; the red lightning flies around: Trees shake their heads to the wind! He looks back with joy, on the day of the sun; and the pleasant dreams of his rest! When shall Ossian's youth return? When his ear delight in the sound of arms? When shall I, like Oscar, travel in the light of my steel? Come, with your streams, ye hills of Cona! listen to the voice of Ossian. The song rises, like the sun in my soul. I feel the joys of other times!

I behold thy towers, O Selma! The oaks of thy shaded wall: Thy streams sound in my ear; thy heroes gather around. Fingal sits in the midst. He leans on the shield of Trenmor: His spear stands against the wall; he listens to the song of his bards. The deeds of his arm are heard; the actions of the king in his youth! Oscar had returned from the chase, and heard the hero's praise.

praise. He took the shield of Branno * from the wall; his eyes were filled with tears. Red was the cheek of youth. His voice was trembling, low. My spear shook its bright head in his hand: He spoke to Morven's king.

"Fingal! thou king of heroes! Ossian, next to him in war! Ye have fought in your youth; your names are renowned in song. Oscar is like the mist of Cona; I appear and I vanish away. The bard will not know my name. The hunter will not search in the heath for my tomb. Let me fight, O heroes, in the battles of Inis-Thona. Distant is the land of my war! Ye shall not hear of Oscar's fall! Some bard may find me there; some bard may give my name to song. The daughter of the stranger shall see my tomb, and weep over the youth that came from afar. The bard shall say, at the feast, "hear the song of Oscar from the distant land!"

"Oscar," replied the king of Morven, "thou shalt fight, son of my fame! Prepare my dark-bosomed ship to carry my hero to Inis-thona. Son of my son, regard our fame; thou art of the race of renown! Let not the children of strangers say, feeble are the sons of Morven! Be thou, in battle, a roaring storm: Mild as the evening sun in peace! Tell, Oscar, to Inis-thona's king, that Fingal remembers his youth; when we strove in the combat together, in the days of Agandecca."

They lifted up the founding sail; the wind whistled through the thongs† of their masts. Waves lash the oozy rocks: The strength of ocean roars.

* This is Branno, the father of Everallin, and grandfather to Oscar; he was of Irish extraction, and lord of the country round the lake of Lego. His great actions are handed down by tradition, and his hospitality has passed into a proverb.

† Leather thongs were used among the Celtic nations instead of ropes.

roars. My son beheld, from the wave, the land of groves. He rushed into Runa's founding bay, and sent his sword to Annir of spears. The grey-haired hero rose, when he saw the sword of Fingal. His eyes were full of tears; he remembered his battles in youth. Twice had they lifted the spear, before the lovely Agandecca: Heroes stood far distant, as if two spirits were striving in winds.

"But now," began the king, "I am old; the sword lies useless in my hall. Thou, who art of Morven's race! Annir has seen the battle of spears; but now he is pale and withered, like the oak of Lano. I have no son to meet thee with joy, to bring thee to the halls of his fathers. Argon is pale in the tomb, and Ruro is no more. My daughter is in the hall of strangers: She longs to behold my tomb. Her spouse shakes ten thousand spears; he comes * a cloud of death from Lano. Come, to share the feast of Annir, son of echoing Morven."

Three days they feasted together; on the fourth, Annir heard the name of Oscar. They rejoiced in the shell †. They pursued the boars of Runa. Beside the fount of mossy stones, the weary heroes rest. The tear steals in secret from
Annir:

* Cormalo had resolved on a war against his father-in-law Annir king of Inis-thona, in order to deprive him of his kingdom: The injustice of his designs was so much resented by Fingal, that he sent his grandson, Oscar, to the assistance of Annir. Both armies came soon to a battle, in which the conduct and valour of Oscar obtained a complete victory. An end was put to the war by the death of Cormalo, who fell in a single combat, by Oscar's hand. Thus is the story delivered down by tradition; though the poet, to raise the character of his son, makes Oscar himself propose the expedition.

† *To rejoice in the shell*, is a phrase for feasting sumptuously, and drinking freely.

Annir: He broke the rising sigh. "Here darkly rest," the hero said, "the children of my youth. This stone is the tomb of Ruro; that tree sounds over the grave of Argon. Do ye hear my voice, O my sons, within your narrow house? Or do ye speak in these rustling leaves, when the winds of the desert rise?"

"King of Inis-thona," said Oscar, "how felt the children of youth? The wild boar rushes over their tombs, but he does not disturb their repose. They pursue deer* formed of clouds, and bend their airy bow. They still love the sport of their youth; and mount the wind with joy."

"Cormalo," replied the king, "is a chief of ten thousand spears. He dwells at the waters of Lano†, which sends forth the vapour of death. He came to Runa's echoing halls, and fought the honour of the spear‡. The youth was lovely as the first beam of the sun; few were they who could meet him in fight! My heroes yielded to Cormalo: My daughter was seized in his love. Argon and Ruro returned from the chace; the tears of their pride descend: They roll their silent eyes on Runa's heroes, who had yielded to a stranger. Three days they feasted with Cormalo: On the fourth young Argon fought. But who could fight with Argon! Cormalo is overcome. His heart

* The notion of Ossian concerning the state of the deceased was the same with that of the ancient Greeks and Romans. They imagined that the souls pursued, in their separate state, the employments and pleasures of their former life.

† Lano was a lake of Scandinavia, remarkable, in the days of Ossian, for emitting a pestilential vapour in autumn. *And thou, O valiant Dubomar! like the mist of morn'g Lano; when it sails over the plains of autumn, and brings death to the host.*

FINGAL, B. I.

‡ By the honour of the spear, is meant the tournament practised among the ancient northern nations.

heart swelled with the grief of pride; he resolved in secret to behold the death of my sons. They went to the hills of Runa: They pursued the dark-brown hinds. The arrow of Cormalo flew in secret; my children fell in blood. He came to the maid of his love; to Inis-thona's long-haired maid. They fled over the desert. Annir remained alone. Night came on and day appeared: Nor Argon's voice, nor Ruro's came. At length their much-loved dog was seen; the fleet and bounding Runar. He came into the hall and howled; and seemed to look towards the place of their fall. We followed him: We found them here: We laid them by this mossy stream. This is the haunt of Annir, when the chase of the hinds is past. I bend like the trunk of an aged oak; my tears for ever flow."

"O Ronnan," said the rising Oscar, "Ogar king of spears! call my heroes to my side, the sons of streamy Morven. To-day we go to Lano's water, that sends forth the vapour of death. Cormalo will not long rejoice: Death is often at the point of our swords!"

They came over the desert like stormy clouds, when the winds roll them along the heath: Their edges are tinged with lightning; the echoing groves foresee the storm! The horn of Oscar's battle is heard; Lano shook over all its waves. The children of the lake convened around the founding shield of Cormalo. Oscar fought, as he was wont in war. Cormalo fell beneath his sword: The sons of dismal Lano fled to their secret vales! Oscar brought the daughter of Inis-thona to Annir's echoing halls. The face of age is bright with joy; he blest the king of swords!

How great was the joy of Ossian, when he beheld the distant sail of his son! It was like a cloud
of

of light that rises in the east, when the traveller is sad in a land unknown; and dismal night, with her ghosts, is sitting around in shades! We brought him, with songs, to Selma's halls. Fingal spread the feast of shells. A thousand bards raised the name of Oscar: Morven answered to the sound. The daughter of Toscar was there; her voice was like the harp; when the distant sound comes, in the evening, on the soft-rustling breeze of the vale!

O lay me, ye that see the light, near some rock of my hills? Let the thick hazels be around, let the rustling oak be near. Green be the place of my rest; let the sound of the distant torrent be heard. Daughter of Toscar, take the harp, and raise the lovely song of Selma; that sleep may overtake my soul in the midst of joy; that the dreams of my youth may return, and the days of the mighty Fingal. Selma! I behold thy towers, thy trees, thy shaded wall! I see the heroes of Morven; I hear the song of bards! Oscar lifts the sword of Cormalo; a thousand youths admire its studded thongs. They look with wonder on my son; They admire the strength of his arm. They mark the joy of his father's eyes; they long for an equal fame. And ye shall have your fame, O sons of streamy Morven! My soul is often brightened with song; I remember the friends of my youth. But sleep descends, in the sound of the harp! Pleasant dreams begin to rise! Ye sons of the chace stand far distant, nor disturb my rest. The bard of other times holds discourse with his fathers, the chiefs of the days of old! Sons of the chace, stand far distant! Disturb not the dreams of Ossian!

THE
BATTLE OF LORA:

A
POEM.

ARGUMENT.

Fingal, on his return from Ireland, after he had expelled Swaran from that kingdom, made a feast to all his heroes; he forgot to invite Ma-ronnan and Aldo, two chiefs, who had not been along with him in his expedition. They resented his neglect; and went over to Erragon king of Sora, a country of Scandinavia, the declared enemy of Fingal. The valour of Aldo soon gained him a great reputation in Sora: And Lorma the beautiful wife of Erragon fell in love with him. He found means to escape with her, and to come to Fingal, who resided then in Selma on the western coast. Erragon invaded Scotland, and was slain in battle by Gaul the son of Morni, after he had rejected terms of peace offered him by Fingal. In this war Aldo fell, in a single combat, by the hands of his rival Erragon, and the unfortunate Lorma afterwards died of grief.

THE
BATTLE OF LORA:

POEM.

SON of the distant land, who dwellest in the secret cell! Do I hear the sound of thy grove? Or is it thy voice of songs? The torrent was loud in my ear; but I heard a tuneful voice. Dost thou praise the chiefs of thy land; or the spirits* of the wind? But, lonely dweller of rocks! look thou on that heathy plain. Thou seest green tombs, with their rank whistling grass; with their stones of mossy heads. Thou seest them, son of the rock, but Ossian's eyes have failed.

A mountain-stream comes roaring down, and sends its waters round a green hill. Four mossy stones, in the midst of withered grass, rear their heads on the top. Two trees, which the storms have bent, spread their whistling branches around. This is thy dwelling, Erragon†; this thy narrow house: The sound of thy shells have been long forgot in Sora. Thy shield is become dark in thy hall. Erragon, king of ships! Chief of distant

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* Alluding to the religious hymns of the Culdees.

† Erragon, or Ferg-thonn, signifies *the rage of the waves*; probably a poetical name given him by Ossian himself; for he goes by the name of Annir in tradition.

Sora! How hast thou fallen on our mountains?
 How is the mighty low? Son of the secret cell!
 Dost thou delight in songs? Hear the battle of
 Lora. The sound of its steel is long since past.
 So thunder on the darkened hill roars and is no
 more. The sun returns with his silent beams.
 The glittering rocks, and green heads of the
 mountains smile.

The bay of Cona received our ships* from
 Erin's rolling waves. Our white sheets hung
 loose to the masts. The boisterous winds roared
 behind the groves of Morven. The horn of the
 king is sounded; the deer starts from their rocks.
 Our arrows flew in the woods. The feast of the
 hill is spread. Our joy was great on our rocks,
 for the fall of the terrible Swaran. Two heroes
 were forgot at our feast. The rage of their bo-
 soms burned. They rolled their red eyes in se-
 cret. The sigh bursts from their breasts. They
 were seen to talk together, and to throw their
 spears on earth. They were two dark clouds, in
 the midst of our joy; like pillars of mist on the
 settled sea. They glitter to the sun, but the ma-
 riners fear a storm.

"Raife my white sails," said Ma-ronnan,
 "raise them to the winds of the west. Let us
 rush, O Aldo! through the foam of the nor-
 thern wave. We are forgot at the feast: But
 our arms have been red in blood. Let us leave
 the hills of Fingal, and serve the king of Sora.
 His countenance is fierce. War darkens around
 his spear. Let us be renowned, O Aldo, in the
 battles of other lands!"

They took their swords, their shields of thongs.
 They rushed to Lumar's resounding bay. They
 came

* This was at Fingal's return from his war against Swaran.

came to Sora's haughty king, the chief of bounding steeds. Erragon had returned from the chase. His spear was red in blood. He bent his dark face to the ground; and whistled as he went. He took the strangers to his feasts: They fought and conquered in his wars.

Aldo returned with his fame towards Sora's lofty walls. From her tower looked the spouse of Erragon, the humid, rolling eyes of Lorma. Her yellow hair flies on the wind of ocean. Her white breast heaves, like snow on heath; when the gentle winds arise, and slowly move it in the light. She saw young Aldo, like the beam of Sora's setting sun. Her soft heart sighed. Tears filled her eyes. Her white arm supported her head. Three days she sat within the hall, and covered her grief with joy. On the fourth she fled with the hero along the troubled sea. They came to Cona's mossy towers, to Fingal king of spears.

"Aldo of the heart of pride!" said Fingal rising in wrath: "Shall I defend thee from the rage of Sora's injured king? Who will now receive my people into their halls? Who will give the feast of strangers, since Aldo, of the little soul, has dishonoured my name in Sora? Go to thy hills, thou feeble hand! Go: Hide thee in thy caves. Mournful is the battle we must fight with Sora's gloomy king. Spirits of the noble Trenmor! When will Fingal cease to fight? I was born in the midst of battles*, and my steps must move in blood to the tomb. But my hand did not injure the weak, my steel did not touch the feeble

F 2

in

* Comhal the father of Fingal was slain in battle, against the tribe of Morni, the very day that Fingal was born; so that he may, with propriety, be said to have been *born in the midst of battles.*

in arms. I behold thy tempests, O Morven† which will overturn my halls; when my children are dead in battle, and none remains to dwell in Selma. Then will the feeble come, but they will not know my tomb. My renown is only in song. My deeds shall be as a dream to future times!"

His people gathered around Erragon, as the storms round the ghost of night; when he calls them, from the top of Morven, and prepares to pour them on the land of the stranger. He came to the shore of Cona. He sent his bard to the king; to demand the combat of thousands; or the land of many hills! Fingal sat in his hall with the friends of his youth around him. The young heroes were at the chace, far distant in the desert. The grey-haired chiefs talked of other times; of the actions of their youth; when the aged Nartmor* came, the chief of streamy Lora.

"This is no time," said Nartmor, "to hear the songs of other years: Erragon frowns on the coast, and lifts ten thousand swords. Gloomy is the king among his chiefs! He is like the darkened moon, amidst the meteors of night; when they sail along her skirts, and give the light that has failed o'er her orb." "Come," said Fingal, "from thy hall, come daughter of my love: Come from thy hall, Bosmina†, maid of streamy Morven! Nartmor, take the steeds of the strangers. Attend the daughter of Fingal! Let her bid the king of Sora to our feast, to Selma's shaded wall. Offer him, O Bosmina! the peace of heroes, and the wealth of generous Aldo.

Our

* Neart-mor, *great strength*. Lora, *noisy*.

† Bos-mhina, *soft and tender hand*. She was the youngest of Fingal's children.

Our youths are far distant. Age is on our trembling hands !”

She came to the host of Erragon, like a beam of light to a cloud. In her right hand was seen a sparkling shell. In her left an arrow of gold. The first, the joyful mark of peace ! The latter, the sign of war. Erragon brightened in her presence as a rock, before the sudden beams of the sun ; when they issue from a broken cloud, divided by the roaring wind !

“ Son of the distant Sora,” began the mildly blushing maid, “ come to the feast of Morven’s king, to Selma’s shaded walls. Take the peace of heroes, O warrior ! Let the dark sword rest by thy side. Choosest thou the wealth of kings ? Then hear the words of generous Aldo. He gives to Erragon an hundred steeds, the children of the rein : An hundred maids from distant lands : An hundred hawks with fluttering wing, that fly across the sky. An hundred * girdles shall also be thine, to bind high-bosomed maids. The friends of the births of heroes. The cure of the sons of toil. Ten shells studded with gems shall shine in Sora’s towers : The bright water trembles on their stars, and seems to be sparkling wine. They gladdened once the kings of the world †, in the midst of their echoing halls. These, O hero ! shall be thine ; or thy white-bosomed spouse. Lorma shall roll her bright eyes in thy

F 3

halls ;

* Sanctified girdles, till very lately, were kept in many families in the north of Scotland ; they were bound about women in labour, and were supposed to alleviate their pains, and to accelerate the birth. They were impressed with several mystical figures, and the ceremony of binding them about the woman’s waist was accompanied with words and gestures, which shewed the custom to have come originally from the Druids.

† The Roman emperors.

halls; though Fingal loves the generous Aldo: Fingal! who never injured a hero, though his arm is strong!"

"Soft voice of Cona!" replied the king, "tell him he spreads his feast in vain. Let Fingal pour his spoils around me. Let him bend beneath my power. Let him give me the swords of his fathers; the shields of other times; that my children may behold them in my halls, and say, "These are the arms of Fingal." "Never shall they behold them in thy hall's!" said the rising pride of the maid. "They are in the hands of heroes, who never yielded in war. King of echoing Sora! the storm is gathering on our hills. Dost thou not foresee the fall of thy people, son of the distant land?"

She came to Selma's silent halls. The king beheld her down-cast eyes. He rose from his place, in his strength. He shook his aged locks. He took the sounding mail of Trenmor. The dark-brown shield of his fathers. Darkness filled Selma's hall, when he stretched his hand to his spear: The ghosts of thousands were near, and foresaw the death of the people. Terrible joy rose in the face of the aged heroes. They rushed to meet the foe. Their thoughts are on the deeds of other years; and on the fame that rises from death!

Now at Trathal's ancient tomb the dogs of the chase appeared. Fingal knew that his young heroes followed. He stopped in the midst of his course. Oscar appeared the first; then Morni's son, and Nemi's race. Fercuth* shewed his gloomy form. Dermid spread his dark hair on wind.

* Fear-cuth, the same with Fergus, *the man of the word*, or a commander of an army.

wind. Ossian came the last. I hummed the song of other times. My spear supported my steps over the little streams. My thoughts were of mighty men. Fingal struck his bosky shield; and gave the dismal sign of war. A thousand swords at once unsheathed, gleam on the waving heath. Three grey-haired sons of song, raise the tuneful, mournful voice. Deep and dark with founding steps, we rush, a gloomy ridge, along: Like the shower of a storm, when it pours on a narrow vale.

The king of Morven sat on his hill. The sunbeam of battle flew on the wind. The friends of his youth are near, with all their waving locks of age. Joy rose in the hero's eyes when he beheld his sons in war: When he saw us amidst the lightning of swords, mindful of the deeds of our fathers. Erragon came on, in his strength, like the roar of a winter stream. The battle falls around his steps: Death dimly stalks along by his side!

“Who comes,” said Fingal, “like the bounding roe, like the hart of echoing Cona? His shield glitters on his side. The clang of his armour is mournful. He meets with Erragon in the strife! Behold the battle of the chiefs! It is like the contending of ghosts in a gloomy storm. But fallest thou, son of the hill, and is thy white bosom stained with blood? Weep, unhappy Lorma, Aldo is no more!” The king took the spear of his strength. He was sad for the fall of Aldo. He bent his deathful eyes on the foe: But Gaul met the king of Sora. Who can relate the fight of the chiefs? The mighty stranger fell!

“Sons of Cona!” Fingal cried aloud, “stop the hand of death. Mighty was he that is low.

Much is he mourned in Sora! The stranger will come towards his hall, and wonder why it is so silent. The king is fallen, O stranger. The joy of his house is ceased. Listen to the sound of his woods. Perhaps his ghost is murmuring there! But he is far distant, on Morven, beneath the sword of a foreign foe." Such were the words of Fingal, when the bard raised the song of peace. We stopped our uplifted swords. We spared the feeble foe. We laid Erragon in a tomb. I raised the voice of grief. The clouds of night came rolling down. The ghost of Erragon appeared to some. His face was cloudy and dark; an half-formed sigh is in his breast. "Blest be thy soul, O king of Sora! Thine arm was terrible in war!"

Lorma sat in Aldo's hall. She sat at the light of a flaming oak. The night came down, but he did not return. The soul of Lorma is sad! "What detains thee, hunter of Cona? Thou didst promise to return. Has the deer been distant far? Do the dark winds sigh, round thee, on the heath? I am in the land of strangers, who is my friend, but Aldo? Come from thy sounding hills, O my best beloved!"

Her eyes are turned toward the gate. She listens to the rustling blast. She thinks it is Aldo's tread. Joy rises in her face! But sorrow returns again, like a thin cloud on the moon. "Wilt thou not return, my love? Let me behold the face of the hill. The moon is in the east. Calm and bright is the breast of the lake! When shall I behold his dogs, returning from the chace? When shall I hear his voice, loud and distant on the wind? Come from thy sounding hills, hunter of woody Cona!" His thin ghost appeared, on a rock, like a watery beam of feeble light: When
the

the moon rushes sudden from between two clouds, and the midnight shower is on the field : She followed the empty form over the heath. She knew that her hero fell. I heard her approaching cries on the wind, like the mournful voice of the breeze, when it sighs on the grass of the cave !

She came. She found her hero ! Her voice was heard no more. Silent she rolled her eyes. She was pale, and wildly sad ! Few were her days on Cona. She sunk into the tomb. Fingal commanded his bards ; they sung over the death of Lorma. The daughters of Morven mourned her, for one day in the year, when the dark winds of autumn returned !

Son of the distant land * ! Thou dwellest in the field of fame ! O let thy song arise, at times, in praise of those who fell. Let their thin ghosts rejoice around thee ; and the soul of Lorma come on a feeble beam † : When thou liest down to rest, and the moon looks into thy cave. Then shalt thou see her lovely ; but the tear is still on her cheek !

* The poet addresses himself to the Culdee.

† Be thou on a moon-beam, O Morna, near the window of my rest ; when my thoughts are of peace ; and the din of arms is past.

FINGAL, B. I.

CONLATH AND CUTHONA:

A

P O E M.

F 6

ARGUMENT

Conlath was the youngest of Morni's sons, and brother to the celebrated Gaul. He was in love with Cuthona the daughter of Rumar, when Toscar, the son of Kinfena, accompanied by Fercuth his friend, arrived from Ireland, at Mora, where Conlath dwelt. He was hospitably received, and, according to the custom of the times, feasted three days with Conlath. On the fourth he set sail, and coasting the *island of waves*, one of the Hebrides, he saw Cuthona hunting, fell in love with her, and carried her away, by force, in his ship. He was forced, by stress of weather, into I-thona, a desert isle. In the mean time Conlath, hearing of the rape, sailed after him, and found him on the point of sailing for the coast of Ireland. They fought; and they and their followers fell by mutual wounds. Cuthona did not long survive: For she died of grief the third day after. Fingal, hearing of their unfortunate death, sent Stormal the son of Moran to bury them, but forgot to send a bard to sing the funeral song over their tombs. The ghost of Conlath comes, long after, to Ossian, to intreat him to transmit, to posterity, his and Cuthona's fame. For it was the opinion of the times, that the souls of the deceased were not happy till their elegies were composed by a bard.

CONLATH AND CUTHONA:

A

POEM.

DID not Ossian hear a voice? or is it the sound of days that are no more? Often does the memory of former times come, like the evening sun, on my soul. The noise of the chase is renewed. In thought, I lift the spear. But Ossian did hear a voice! Who art thou, son of night? The children of the feeble are asleep. The midnight wind is in my hall. Perhaps it is the shield of Eingal that echoes to the blast. It hangs in Ossian's hall. He feels it sometimes with his hands. Yes! I hear thee, my friend! Long has thy voice been absent from mine ear! What brings thee, on thy cloud, to Ossian, son of generous Morni? Are the friends of the aged near thee? Where is Oscar, son of fame? He was often near thee, O Conlath, when the sound of battle arose.

GHOST OF CONLATH.—Sleeps the sweet voice of Cona, in the midst of his rustling hall? Sleeps Ossian in his hall, and his friends without their fame? The sea rolls round dark
I-thona

I-thona *. Our tombs are not seen in our isle. How long shall our fame be unheard, son of re-founding Selma ?

OSSIAN. O that mine eyes could behold thee ! Thou fittest, dim on thy cloud ! Art thou like the mist of Lano ? An half-extinguished meteor of fire ? Of what are the skirts of thy robe ? Of what is thine airy bow ? He is gone on his blast like the shade of a wandering cloud. Come from thy wall, O harp ! Let me hear thy sound. Let the light of memory rise on Ithona. Let me behold again my friends ! And Ossian does behold his friends, on the dark-blue isle. The cave of Thona appears, with its mossy rocks and bending trees. A stream roars at its mouth. Toscar bends over its course. Fercuth is sad by his side. Cuthona † sits at a distance, and weeps. Does the wind of the waves deceive me ? Or do I hear them speak ?

TOSCAR. The night was stormy. From their hills the groaning oaks came down. The sea darkly-tumbled beneath the blast. The roaring waves climbed against our rocks. The lightning came often and showed the blasted fern. Fercuth ! I saw the ghost who embroiled the night ‡, Silent he stood, on that bank. His robe of mist flew on the wind. I could behold his tears. An aged man he seemed, and full of thought !

FERCUTH.

* I-thonn, *island of waves*, one of the uninhabited western isles.

† Cuthona the daughter of Rumar, whom Toscar had carried away by force.

‡ It was long thought in the north of Scotland that storms were raised by the ghosts of the deceased. This notion is still entertained by the vulgar ; for they think that whirlwinds and sudden squalls of wind are occasioned by spirits, who transport themselves, in that manner, from one place to another.

FERCUTH. It was thy father, O Toscar. He foresees some death among his race. Such was his appearance on Cromla, before the great Maronnan * fell. Erin of hills of grass ! how pleasant are thy vales ? Silence is near thy blue streams. The sun is on thy fields. Soft is the sound of the harp in Selama†. Lovely the cry of the hunter on Cromla. But we are in dark Ithona, surrounded by the storm. The billows lift their white heads above our rocks. We tremble amidst the night.

TOSCAR. Whither is the soul of battle fled, Fercuth with locks of age ? I have seen thee undaunted in danger : Thine eyes burning with joy in the fight. Whither is the soul of battle fled ? Our fathers never feared. Go : View the settling sea : The stormy wind is laid. The billows still tremble on the deep. They seem to fear the blast. Go view the settling sea. Morning is grey on our rocks. The sun will look soon from his east ; in all his pride of light ! I lifted up my sails with joy, before the halls of generous Conlath. My course was by a desert isle : Where Cuthona pursued the deer. I saw her, like that beam of the sun that issues from the cloud. Her hair was on her heaving breast. She bending forward drew the bow. Her white arm seemed, behind her, like the snow of Cromla. Come to my soul, I said, huntress of the desert isle ! But she wastes her time in tears. She thinks of the generous Conlath. Where can I find thy peace, Cuthona, lovely maid !

CUTHONA.

* Ma-ronnan was the mother of Toscar.

† Selamath, *beautiful to behold*, the name of Toscar's residence, on the coast of Ulster, near the mountain Cromla.

CUTHONA *. A distant steep bends over the sea, with aged trees and mossy rocks. The billow rolls at its feet. In its side is the dwelling of roes. The people call it Mora. There the towers of my love arise. There Conlath looks over the sea for his only love. The daughters of the chace returned. He beheld their downcast eyes. "Where is the daughter of Rumar?" But they answered not. My peace dwells on Mora, son of the distant land!

TOSCAR. Cuthona shall return to her peace: to the towers of generous Conlath. He is the friend of Toscar! I have feasted in his halls! Rise, ye gentle breezes of Erin. Stretch my sails toward Mora's shores. Cuthona shall rest on Mora: But the days of Toscar must be sad. I shall sit in my cave in the field of the sun. The blast will rustle in my trees. I shall think it is Cuthona's voice. But she is distant far, in the halls of the mighty Conlath!

CUTHONA. Ha! what cloud is that? It carries the ghosts of my fathers. I see the skirts of their robes, like grey and watery mist. When shall I fall, O Rumar? Sad Cuthona foresees her death. Will not Conlath behold me, before I enter the narrow house †?

OSSIAN. He shall behold thee, O maid. He comes along the heaving sea. The death of Toscar is dark on his spear. A wound is in his side! He is pale at the cave of Thona. He shows his ghastly wound. Where art thou with thy tears, Cuthona? The chief of Mora dies. The vision grows dim on my mind. I behold the chiefs
no

* Cu-thona, *the mournful sound of the waves*; a poetical name given her on account of her mourning to the sound of the waves; her name in tradition is Gorm-huil, *the blue-eyed maid*.

† The grave.

no more ! But, O ye bards of future times, remember the fall of Conlath with tears. He fell before his day. Sadness darkened in his hall. His mother looked to his shield on the wall, and it was bloody *. She knew that her hero fell. Her sorrow was heard on Mora. Art thou pale on thy rock, Cuthona, beside the fallen chiefs ! Night comes, and day returns, but none appears to raise their tomb. Thou frightenest the screaming fowls away. Thy tears for ever flow. Thou art pale as a watery cloud, that rises from a lake !

The sons of green Selma came. They found Cuthona cold. They raised a tomb over the heroes. She rests at the side of Conlath ! Come not to my dreams, O Conlath ! Thou hast received thy fame. Be thy voice far distant from my hall ; that sleep may descend at night. O that I could forget my friends : Till my footsteps should cease to be seen ! till I come among them with joy ! and lay my aged limbs in the narrow house !

* It was the opinion of the times, that the arms left by the heroes at home became bloody the very instant their owners were killed, though at ever so great a distance.



CARTHON:

A

POEM.

A R G U M E N T.

This poem is complete, and the subject of it, as of most of Ossian's compositions, tragical. In the time of Comhal the son of Trathal, and father of the celebrated Fingal, Clessammor the son of Thaddu and brother of Morna, Fingal's mother, was driven by a storm into the river Clyde, on the banks of which stood Balclutha, a town belonging to the Britons between the walls. He was hospitably received by Reuthamir, the principal man in the place, who gave him Moina his only daughter in marriage. Reuda, the son of Gormo, a Briton who was in Love with Moina, came to Reuthamir's house, and behaved haughtily towards Clessammor. A quarrel ensued, in which Reuda was killed; the Britons who attended him pressed so hard on Clessammor, that he was obliged to throw himself into the clyde, and swim to his ship. He hoisted sail, and the wind being favourable, bore him out to sea. He often endeavoured to return, and carry off his beloved Moina by night; but the wind continuing contrary, he was forced to desist.

Moina who had been left with child by her husband, brought forth a son, and died soon after.—Reuthamir named the child Carthon, *i. e.* *the murmur of waves*, from the storm which carried off Clessammor his father, who was supposed to have been cast away. When Carthon was three years old, Comhal the father of Fingal, in one of his expeditions against the Britons, took and burnt Balclutha. Reuthamir was killed in the attack: And Carthon was carried safe away by his nurse, who fled farther into the country of the Britons. Carthon, coming to a man's estate, was resolved to revenge the fall of Balclutha on Comhal's posterity. He set sail, from the Clyde, and, falling on the coast of Morven, defeated two of Fingal heroes, who came to oppose his progress. He was, at last, unwittingly killed by his father Clessammor, in a single combat. This story is the foundation of the present poem, which opens on the night preceding the death of Carthon, so that what passed before is introduced by way of episode. The poem is addressed to Malvina the daughter of Toscar.

CARTHON:

A

POEM.

A TALE of the times of old! The deeds of days of other years!

The murmur of thy streams, O Lora! brings back the memory of the past. The sound of thy woods, Garmallar, is lovely in mine year. Dost thou not behold, Malvina, a rock with its head of heath? Three aged pines bend from its face; green is the narrow plain at its feet; there the flower of the mountain grows, and shakes its white head in the breeze. The thistle is there alone shedding its aged beard. Two stones, half sunk in the ground, show their heads of moss. The deer of the mountain avoids the place, for he beholds a dim ghost standing there*. The mighty lie, O Malvina! in the narrow plain of the rock.

A Tale of the times of old! the deeds of days of other years!

Who comes from the land of strangers, with his thousands around him? the sun-beam pours its bright stream before him; his hair meets the wind of his hills. His face is settled from war.
He

* It was the opinion of the times that deer saw the ghosts of the dead. To this day, when beasts suddenly start, without any apparent cause, the vulgar think that they see the spirits of the deceased.

He is calm as the evening beam that looks, from the cloud of the west, on Cona's silent vale. Who is it but Comhal's son *, the king of mighty deeds ! He beholds his hills with joy, he bids a thousand voices rise. " Ye have fled over your fields, ye sons of the distant land ! The king of the world sits in his hall, and hears of his people's flight. He lifts his red eye of pride : He takes his father's sword. Ye have fled over your fields, sons of the distant land !"

Such were the words of the bards, when they came to Selma's halls. A thousand lights † from the stranger's land rose, in the midst of the people. The feast is spread around ; the night passed away in joy. Where is the noble Cleffammor ‡, said the fair-haired Fingal ? Where is the brother of Morna, in the hour of my joy ? Sullen and dark he passes his days in the vale of echoing Lora : But, behold, he comes from the hill, like a steed in his strength, who finds his companions in the breeze ; and tosses his bright mane in the wind. Blest be the soul of Cleffammor, why so long from Selma ?

Returns the chief, said Cleffammor, in the midst of his fame ? Such was the renown of Comhal in the battles of his youth. Often did we pass over Carun to the land of the strangers : Our swords returned, not unstained with blood : Nor did the kings of the world rejoice. Why do I remember the times of our war ? My hair is mixed with grey. My hand forgets to bend the bow !

I lift

* Fingal returns here, from an expedition against the Romans, which was celebrated by Ossian in a poem called *the strife of Crona*.

† Probably wax-lights ; which are often mentioned as carried, among other booty, from the Roman province.

‡ Cleffamh mor, *mighty deeds*.

I lift a lighter spear. O that my joy would return, as when I first beheld the maid; the white-bosomed daughter of strangers, Moina *, with the dark-blue eyes!

Tell, said the mighty Fingal, the tale of thy youthful days. Sorrow, like a cloud on the sun, shades the soul of Cleffammor. Mournful are thy thoughts, alone, on the banks of the roaring Lora. Let us hear the sorrow of thy youth, and the darkness of thy days!

"It was in the days of peace," replied the great Cleffammor, "I came in my bounding ship, to Balclutha's † walls of towers. The winds had roared behind my sails, and Clutha's ‡ streams received my dark-bosomed ship. Three days I remained in Reuthamir's halls, and saw his daughter, that beam of light. The joy of the shell went round, and the aged hero gave the fair. Her breasts were like foam on the wave, and her eyes like stars of light: Her hair was dark as the raven's wing: Her soul was generous and mild. My love for Moina was great: My heart poured forth in joy.

"The son of a stranger came; a chief who loved the white-bosomed Moina. His words were mighty in the hall; he often half-unsheathed his sword. Where, said he, is the mighty Comhal, the restless

* Moina, *soft in temper and person*. We find the British name in this poem derived from the Galic, which is a proof that the ancient language of the whole island was one and the same.

† Balclutha, *i. e. the town of Clyde*, probably the *Alcluth* of Bede.

‡ Clutha, or Cluath, the Galic name of the river Clyde, the signification of the word is *bending*, in allusion to the winding course of that river. From Clutha is derived its Latin name, Glotta,

restless wanderer * of the heath? Comes he, with his host, to Balclutha, since Cleffammor is so bold? My soul, I replied, O warrior! burns in a light of its own. I stand without fear in the midst of thousands, though the valiant are distant far. Stranger! thy words are mighty, for Cleffammor is alone. But my sword trembles by my side, and longs to glitter in my hand. Speak no more of Comhal, son of the winding Clutha!"

"The strength of his pride arose. We fought; he fell beneath my sword. The banks of Clutha heard his fall; a thousand spears glittered around. I fought: the strangers prevailed: I plunged into the stream of Clutha. My white sails rose over the waves, and I bounded on the dark-blue sea. Moina came to the shore, and rolled the red eye of her tears: Her loose hair flew on the wind; and I heard her mournful, distant cries. Often did I turn my ship; but the winds of the East prevailed. Nor Clutha ever since have I seen, nor Moina of the dark brown hair. She fell in Balclutha, for I have seen her ghost. I knew her as she came through the dusky night, along the murmur of Lora: She was like the new moon, seen through the gathered mist: When the sky pours down its flaky snow, and the world is silent and dark."

Raife †, ye bards, said the mighty Fingal, the praise of unhappy Moina. Call her ghost, with
your

* The word in the original here rendered by *restless wanderer* is *Scuta*, which is the true origin of the *Scoti* of the Romans; an opprobrious name imposed by the Britons, on the Caledonians, on account of the continual incursions into their country.

† The title of the poem, in the original, is *Duan na ulaoi*, *i. e.* *The Poem of the Hymns*; probably on account of its many digressions from the subject, all which are in a lyric measure, as this song of Fingal. Fingal is celebrated by the Irish historians

your songs, to our hills; that she may rest with the fair of Morven, the sun-beams of other days, the delight of heroes of old. I have seen the walls of Balclutha, but they were desolate. The fire had resounded in the halls: And the voice of the people is heard no more. The stream of Clutha was removed from its place, by the fall of the walls. The thistle shook, there, its lonely head: The moss whistled to the wind. The fox looked out from the windows, the rank grass of the wall waved round its head. Desolate is the dwelling of Moina, silence is in the house of her fathers. Raise the song of mourning, O bards! over the land of strangers. They have but fallen before us: For, one day, we must fall. Why dost thou build the hall, son of the winged days? Thou lookest from thy towers to-day; yet a few years, and the blast of the desert comes; it howls in thy empty court, and whistles round thy half-worn shield. And let the blast of the desert come! We shall be renowned in our day! The mark of my arm shall be in battle; my name in the song of bards. Raise the song; send round the shell: Let joy be heard in my hall. When thou, sun of heaven, shalt fail! If thou shalt fail, thou mighty light! if thy brightness is for a season, like Fingal; our fame shall survive thy beams!

Such was the song of Fingal, in the day of his joy. His thousand bards leaned forward from their seats, to hear the voice of the king. It was like the music of harps on the gale of the spring. Lovely were thy thoughts, O Fingal! Why had

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not

rians for his wisdom in making laws, his poetical genius, and his foreknowledge of events. O'Flaherty goes so far as to say, that Fingal's laws were extant in his own time.

not Ossian the strength of thy soul? But thou standest alone, my father! Who can equal the king of Selma?

The night passed away in song; morning returned in joy. The mountains shewed their grey heads; the blue face of ocean smiled. The white wave is seen tumbling round the distant rock; a mist rose, slowly, from the lake. It came, in the figure of an aged man, along the silent plain. Its large limbs did not move in steps; for a ghost supported it in mid air. It came towards Selma's hall, and dissolved in a shower of blood.

The king alone beheld the sight; he foresaw the death of the people. He came, in silence, to his hall; and took his father's spear. The mail rattled on his breast. The heroes rose around. They looked, in silence, on each other, marking the eyes of Fingal. They saw battle in his face: The death of armies on his spear. A thousand shields, at once, are placed on their arms; they drew a thousand swords. The hall of Selma brightened around. The clang of arms ascends. The grey dogs howl in their place. No word is among the mighty chiefs. Each marked the eyes of the king; and half assumed his spear.

Sons of Morven, begun the king, this is no time to fill the shell. The battle darkens near us; death hovers over the land. Some ghost, the friend of Fingal, has forewarned us of the foe. The sons of the stranger come from the darkly-rolling sea. For, from the water, came the sign of Morven's gloomy danger. Let each assume his heavy spear, each gird on his father's sword. Let the dark helmet rise on every head; the

the mail pour its lightning from every side. 'The battle gathers like a storm; soon shall ye hear the roar of death.

The hero moved on before his host, like a cloud before a ridge of green fire; when it pours on the sky of night, and mariners foresee a storm. On Cona's rising heath they stood: The white-bosomed maids beheld them above like a grove; they foresaw the death of the youth, and looked towards the sea with fear. The white wave deceived them for distant sails; the tear is on their cheek! The sun rose on the sea, and we beheld a distant fleet. Like the mist of ocean they came; and poured their youth upon the coast. The chief was among them, like the stag in the midst of the herd. His shield is studded with gold; stately strode the king of spears. He moved towards Selma; his thousands moved behind.

Go, with a song of peace, said Fingal; go, Ullin, to the king of swords. Tell him that we are mighty in war; that the ghosts of our foes are many. But renowned are they who have feasted in my halls! They shew the arms* of my fathers in a foreign land: The sons of the strangers wonder, and bless the friends of Morven's race; for our names have been heard afar: The kings of the world shook in the midst of their host.

Ullin went with his song. Fingal rested on his spear: He saw the mighty foe in his armour: He blest the stranger's son. "How stately art

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thou,

* It was a custom among the ancient Scots, to exchange arms with their guests; and those arms were preserved long in the different families, as monuments of the friendship which subsisted between their ancestors.

thou, son of the sea! said the king of woody Morven. Thy sword is a beam of fire by thy side: Thy spear is a pine that defies the storm. The varied face of the moon is not broader than thy shield. Ruddy is thy face of youth! Soft the ringlets of thy hair! But this tree may fall; and his memory be forgot! The daughter of the stranger will be sad, looking to the rolling sea: The children will say, "We see a ship; perhaps it is the king of Balclutha." The tear starts from their mother's eye. Her thoughts are of him who sleeps in Morven!"

Such were the words of the king, when Ullin came to the mighty Carthon; he threw down the spear before him; he raised the song of peace. "Come to the feast of Fingal, Carthon, from the rolling sea! Partake of the feast of the king, or lift the spear of war! The ghosts of our foes are many; but renowned are the friends of Morven! Behold that field, O Carthon; many a green hill rises there, with mossy stones and rustling grass; these are the tombs of Fingal's foes; the sons of the rolling sea!"

"Dost thou speak to the weak in arms!" said Carthon, "bard of the woody Morven? Is my face pale for fear, son of the peaceful song? Why, then, dost thou think to darken my soul with the tales of those who fell? My arm has fought in battle; my renown is known afar. Go to the feeble in arms, bid them yield to Fingal. Have not I seen the fallen Balclutha? And shall I feast with Comhal's son? Comhal! who threw his fire in the midst of my father's hall! I was young, and knew not the cause, why the virgins wept. The columns of smoke pleased mine eye, when they rose above my walls! I
often

often looked back, with gladness, when my friends fled along the hill. But when the years of my youth came on, I beheld the moss of my fallen walls: My sigh arose with the morning, and my tears descended with night. Shall I not fight, I said to my soul, against the children of my foes! And I will fight, O bard! I feel the strength of my soul."

His people gathered around the hero, and drew, at once, their shining swords. He stands, in the midst, like a pillar of fire; the tear half-starting from his eye; for he thought of the fallen Balclutha; the crowded pride of his soul arose. Sidelong he looked up to the hill, where our heroes shone in arms; the spear trembled in his hand: Bending forward, he seemed to threaten the king.

Shall I, said Fingal to his soul, meet, at once, the youth? Shall I stop him, in the midst of his course, before his fame shall arise? But the bard, hereafter, may say, when he sees the tomb of Carthon; Fingal took his thousands to battle, before the noble Carthon fell. No: Bard of the times to come, thou shalt not lessen Fingal's fame. My heroes will fight the youth, and Fingal behold the war. If he overcomes, I rush, in my strength, like the roaring stream of Cona. Who, of my chiefs, will meet the son of the rolling sea? Many are his warriors on the coast; and strong is his ashen spear!

Cathul* rose, in his strength, the son of the mighty Lormar: Three hundred youths attend

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the

* Cath-'huil, *the eye of battle.*

the chief, the race * of his native streams. Feeble was his arm against Carthon, he fell; and his heroes fled. Connal† resumed the battle, but he broke his heavy spear: He lay bound on the field: Carthon pursued his people.

Cleffammor! said the king‡ of Morven, where is the spear of thy strength? Wilt thou behold Connal bound; thy friend, at the stream of Lora? Rise, in the light of thy steel, companion of valiant Comhal? Let the youth of Balclutha feel the strength of Morven's race. He rose, in the strength of his steel, shaking his grizly locks. He fitted the shield to his side; he rushed, in the pride of valour.

Carthon stood on a rock; he saw the hero rushing on. He loved the dreadful joy of his face: His strength, in the locks of age! "Shall I lift that spear, he said, that never strikes, but once, a foe? Or shall I, with the words of peace, preserve the warrior's life? Stately are his steps of age! Lovely the remnant of his years! Perhaps it is the husband of Moina; the father of ear-borne Carthon. Often have I heard, that he dwelt at the echoing stream of Lora."

Such were his words, when Cleffammor came, and lifted high his spear. The youth received it on his shield, and spoke the words of peace. "Warrior of the aged locks! Is there no youth to lift the spear? Hast thou no son, to raise the shield before

* It appears, from this passage, that clanship was established in the days of Fingal, though not on the same footing with the present tribes in the north of Scotland.

† This Connal is very much celebrated in ancient poetry, for his wisdom and valour: There is a small tribe still subsisting, in the north, who pretend they are descended from him.

‡ Fingal did not then know that Carthon was the son of Cleffammor.

before his father, to meet the arm of youth? Is the spouse of thy love no more? Or weeps she over the tombs of thy sons? Art thou of the kings of men? What will be the fame of my sword should'st thou fall?"

It will be great, thou son of pride! begun the tall Cleffammor. I have been renowned in battle; but I never told my name* to a foe. Yield to me, son of the wave, then shalt thou know, that the mark of my sword is in many a field. "I never yielded, king of spears! replied the noble pride of Carthon: I have also fought in war; I behold my future fame. Despise me not, thou chief of men! My arm, my spear is strong. Retire among thy friends, let younger heroes fight." Why dost thou wound my soul? replied Cleffammor, with a tear. Age does not tremble on my hand; I still can lift the sword. Shall I fly in Fingal's fight; in the fight of him I love? Son of the sea! I never fled: Exalt thy pointed spear.

They fought, like two contending winds, that strive to roll the wave. Carthon bade his spear to err; he still thought that the foe was the spouse of Moina. He broke Cleffammor's beamy spear in twain: He seized his shining sword: But, as Carthon was binding the chief, the chief drew the dagger of his fathers. He saw the foe's uncovered side, and opened there a wound.

G 4

Fingal

* To tell one's name to an enemy was reckoned, in those days of heroism, a manifest evasion of fighting him; for if it was once known that friendship subsisted, of old, between the ancestors of the combatants, the battle immediately ceased, and the ancient amity of their forefathers was renewed. *A man who tells his name to his enemy, was of old an ignominious term for a coward.*

Fingal saw Cleffammor low : He moved in the found of his steel. The host stood silent, in his presence ; they turned their eyes to the king. He came, like the sudden noise of a storm, before the winds arise : The hunter hears it in the vale, and retires to the cave of the rock. Carthon stood in his place : The blood is rushing down his side : He saw the coming down of the king ; his hopes of fame arose * ; but pale was his cheek : His hair flew loose, his helmet shook on high : The force of Carthon failed ; but his soul was strong.

Fingal beheld the hero's blood ; he stopt the uplifted spear. " Yield, king of swords ! said Comhal's son ; I behold thy blood. Thou hast been mighty in battle ; and thy name shall never fade." " Art thou the king so far renowned, replied the car-borne Carthon ? Art thou that light of death, that frightens the kings of the world ? But why should Carthon ask ? For he is like the stream of his hills ; strong as a river, in his course : Swift as the eagle of heaven. O that I had fought with the king ; that my fame might be great in song ! That the hunter, beholding my tomb, might say, he fought with the mighty Fingal. But Carthon dies unknown ; he has poured out his force on the weak."

But thou shalt not die unknown, replied the king of woody Morven : My bards are many, O Carthon ! Their songs descend to future times. The children of years to come shall hear the fame of Carthon ; when they sit round the burning
oak

* This expression admits of a double meaning, either that Carthon hoped to acquire glory by killing Fingal ; or, to be rendered famous by falling by his hand. The last is the most probable, as Carthon is already wounded.

oak *, and the night is spent in songs of old. The hunter, sitting in the heath, shall hear the rustling blast; and, raising his eyes, behold the rock where Carthon fell. He shall turn to his son, and shew the place where the mighty fought: “ There the king of Balclutha fought, like the strength of a thousand streams.”

Joy rose in Carthon's face: He lifted his heavy eyes. He gave his sword to Fingal, to lie within his hall, that the memory of Balclutha's king might remain in Morven. The battle ceased along the field, the bard had sung the song of peace. The chiefs gathered round the falling Carthon; they heard his words, with sighs. Silent they leaned on their spears, while Balclutha's hero spoke: His hair sighed in the wind, and his voice was sad and low.

“ King of Morven,” Carthon said, “ I fall in the midst of my course. A foreign tomb receives, in youth, the last of Reuthamir's race. Darkness dwells in Balclutha: The shadows of grief in Crathmo. But raise my remembrance on the banks of Lora; where my fathers dwelt. Perhaps the husband of Moina will mourn over his fallen Carthon.” His words reached the heart of Cleffammor: He fell, in silence, on his son. The host stood darkened around: No voice is on the plain. Night came; the moon, from the east, looked on the mournful field; but still they stood, like a silent grove that lifts its head on Gormal, when the loud winds are laid, and dark autumn is on the plain.

Three days they mourned above Carthon; on the fourth his father died. In the narrow plain

G 5

of

* In the north of Scotland, till very lately, they burnt a large trunk of an oak at their festivals; it was called *the trunk of the feast*. Time had so much consecrated the custom, that the vulgar thought it a kind of sacrilege to disuse it.

of the rock they lie ; a dim ghost defends their tomb. There lovely Moina is often seen ; when the sunbeam darts on the rock, and all around is dark. There she is seen, Malvina ! but not like the daughters of the hill. Her robes are from the stranger's land ; and she is still alone !

Fingal was sad for Carthon ; he commanded his bards to mark the day, when shadowy autumn returned : And often did they mark the day and sing the hero's praise. " Who comes so dark from ocean's roar, like autumn's shadowy cloud ? Death is trembling in his hand ! His eyes are flames of fire ! Who roars along dark Lora's heath ? Who but Carthon, king of swords ! The people fall ! see ! how he strides, like the fullen ghost of Morven ! But there he lies a goodly oak, which sudden blasts overturned ! When shalt thou rise, Balclutha's joy ? When Carthon, shalt thou arise ? Who comes so dark from ocean's roar, like autumn's shadowy cloud ?" Such were the words of the bards, in the day of their mourning : Ossian often joined their voice ; and added to their song. My soul has been mournful for Carthon ; he fell in the days of his youth : And thou, O Cleffammor ! Where is thy dwelling in the wind ? Has the youth forgot his wound ? Flies he on clouds with thee ? I feel the sun, O Malvina ! Leave me to my rest. Perhaps they may come to my dreams ; I think I hear a feeble voice ! The beam of heaven delights to shine on the grave of Carthon : I feel it warm around !

O thou that rollest above, round as the shield of my fathers ! Whence are thy beams, O sun ! thy everlasting light ? Thou comest forth, in thy awful beauty ; the stars hide themselves in the sky ; the moon, cold and pale, sinks in the western

ern wave. But thou thyself movest alone: Who can be a companion of thy course! The oaks of the mountains fall: The mountains themselves decay with years; the ocean shrinks and grows again: The moon herself is lost in heaven; but thou art for ever the same; rejoicing in the brightness of thy course. When the world is dark with tempests; when thunder rolls, and lightning flies; thou lookest in thy beauty, from the clouds, and laughest at the storm. But to Ossian, thou lookest in vain; for he beholds thy beams no more; whether thy yellow hair flows on the eastern clouds, or thou tremblest at the gates of the west. But thou art, perhaps, like me, for a season, thy years will have an end. Thou shalt sleep in thy clouds, careless of the voice of the morning. Exult then, O sun! in the strength of thy youth! Age is dark and unlovely; it is like the glimmering light of the moon, when it shines through broken clouds, and the mist is on the hills; the blast of north is on the plain, the traveller shrinks in the midst of his journey.

THE
DEATH OF CUTHULLIN:

A
POEM.

ARGUMENT.

Cuthullin, after the arms of Fingal had expelled Swaran from Ireland, continued to manage the affairs of that kingdom, as the guardian of Cormac the young king. In the third year of Cuthullin's administration, Torlath, the son of Cantela, rebelled in Connaught; and advanced to Temora to dethrone Cormac. Cuthullin marched against him, came up with him at the lake of Lego, and totally defeated his forces. Torlath fell in battle by Cuthullin's hand; but, as he too eagerly pressed on the enemy, he was mortally wounded. The affairs of Cormac, though, for some time, supported by Nathos, as mentioned in another poem, fell into confusion at the death of Cuthullin. Cormac himself was slain by the rebel Cairbar; and the re-establishment of the royal family of Ireland by Fingal furnishes the subject of the epic poem of Temora.

THE
DEATH OF CUTHULLIN:

A
P O E M.

“ Is the wind on the shield of Fingal? Or is the voice of past times in my hall? Sing on sweet voice! for thou art pleasant. Thou carriest away my night with joy. Sing on, O Bragela, daughter of car-borne Sorglan!

“ It is the white wave of the rock, and not Cuthullin’s sails. Often do the mists deceive me, for the ship of my love! when they rise round some ghost, and spread their grey skirts on the wind. Why dost thou delay thy coming, son of the generous Semo? Four times has autumn returned with its winds, and raised the seas of Togorma*, since thou hast been in the roar of battles, and Bragela distant far! Hills of the isle of mist! when will ye answer to his hounds? But ye are dark in your clouds. Sad Bragela calls in vain! Night comes rolling down. The face of
ocean

* Togorma, *i. e.* the island of blue waves, one of the Hebrides, was subject to Connal, the son of Caithbat, Cuthullin’s friend. He is sometimes called the son of Colgar, from one of that name who was the founder of the family. Connal, a few days before the news of Torlath’s revolt came to Temora, had sailed to Togorma, his native isle; where he was detained by contrary winds during the war in which Cuthullin was killed.

ocean fails. The heath-cock's head is beneath his wing. The hind sleeps, with the hart of the desert. They shall rise with morning's light, and feed by the mossy stream. But my tears return with the sun. My sighs come on with the night. When wilt thou come in thine arms, O chief of Erin's wars?"

Pleasant is thy voice in Ossian's ear, daughter of car-borne Sorglán! But retire to the hall of shells; to the beam of the burning oak. Attend to the murmur of the sea: It rolls at Dunscäi's walls: Let sleep descend on thy blue eyes. Let the hero arise in thy dreams!

Cuthullin sits at Lego's lake, at the dark rolling of waters. Night is around the hero. His thousands spread on the heath. A hundred oaks burn, in the midst. The feast of shells is smoaking wide. Carril strikes the harp, beneath a tree. His grey locks glitter in the beam. The rustling blast of night is near, and lifts his aged hair. His song is of the blue Togorma, and of its chief, Cuthullin's friend! "Why art thou absent, Connal, in the day of the gloomy storm? The chiefs of the south have convened, against the car-borne Cormac. The winds detain thy sails. Thy blue waters roll around thee. But Cormac is not alone. The son of Semo fights his wars! Semo's son his battles fights! the terror of the stranger! He that is like the vapour of death, slowly borne by sultry winds. The sun reddens in its presence: The people fall around."

Such was the song of Carril, when a son of the foe appeared. He threw down his pointless spear. He spoke the words of Torlath! Torlath, chief of heroes, from Lego's fable surge! He that led his thousands to battle, against car-borne Cormac. Cormac who was distant far, in
Temora's

Temora's* echoing halls: He learned to bend the bow of his fathers; and to lift the spear. Nor long didst thou lift the spear, mildly-shining beam of youth! death stands dim behind thee, like the darkened half of the moon, behind its growing light! Cuthullin rose before the bard †, that came from generous Torlath. He offered him the shell of joy. He honoured the son of songs. "Sweet voice of Lego!" he said, "what are the words of Torlath? Comes he to our feast or battle, the car-borne son of Cantela ‡?"

"He comes to thy battle," replied the bard, "to the sounding strife of spears. When morning is grey on Lego, Torlath will fight on the plain. Wilt thou meet him, in thine arms, king of the isle of mist? Terrible is the spear of Torlath! it is a meteor of night. He lifts it, and the people fall! death sits in the lightning of his sword!" "Do I fear," replied Cuthullin, "the spear of car-borne Torlath! He is brave as a thousand heroes: But my soul delights in war! The sword rests not by the side of Cuthullin, bard of the times of old! Morning shall meet me on the plain, and gleam on the blue arms of Semo's son. But sit thou, on the heath, O bard! and let us hear thy voice. Partake of the joyful shell; and hear the songs of Temora!"

"This is no time," replied the bard, "to hear the song of joy: When the mighty are to meet in battle,

* The royal palace of the Irish kings; Teamhrath, according to some of the bards.

† The bards were the heralds of ancient times; and their persons were sacred on account of their office. In later times they abused that privilege; and as their persons were inviolable, they satirised and lampooned so freely those who were not liked by their patrons, that they became a public nuisance. Screened under the character of heralds, they grossly abused the enemy when he would not accept the terms they offered.

‡ Cean-teola, head of a family.

battle, like the strength of the waves of Lego. Why art thou so dark, Slimora * ! with all thy silent woods ? No star trembles on thy top. No moon-beam on thy side. But the meteors of death are there : The grey watery forms of ghosts. Why art thou dark, Slimora ! with thy silent woods ?" He retired, in the sound of his song. Carril joined his voice. The music was like the memory of joys that are past, pleasant and mournful to the soul. The ghosts of departed bards heard on Slimora's side. Soft sounds spread along the wood. The silent valleys of night rejoice. So, when he sits in the silence of the day, in the valley of his breeze, the humming of the mountain bee comes to Ossian's ear : The gale drowns it in its course ; but the pleasant sound returns again ! Slant looks the sun on the field ! gradual grows the shade of the hill !

" Raife," said Cuthullin, to his hundred bards, " the song of the noble Fingal : That song which he hears at night, when the dreams of his rest descend ! When the bards strike the distant harp, and the faint light gleams on Selma's walls. Or let the grief of Lara rise : The sighs of the mother of Calmar †, when he was fought, in vain, on his hills ; when she heheld his bow in the hall. Carril, place the shield of Caithbat on that branch. Let the spear of Cuthullin be near ; that the sound of my battle may rise, with the grey beam of the east." The hero leaned on his father's

* *Slia'mor, great bill.*

† Calmar, the son of Matha. His death is related at large in the third book of Fingal. He was the only son of Matha ; and the family was extinct in him. The seat of the family was on the banks of the river Lara, in the neighbourhood of Lego, and probably near the place where Cuthullin lay ; which circumstance suggested to him the lamentation of Alcitha over her son.

father's shield : The song of Lara rose ! the hundred bards were distant far : Carril alone is near the chief. The words of the song were his : The sound of his harp was mournful.

“ Alcletha * with the aged locks ! mother of car-borne Calmar ! why dost thou look toward the desert, to behold the return of thy son ? These are not his heroes, dark on the heath : Nor is that the voice of Calmar. It is but the distant grove, Alcletha ! but the roar of the mountain wind !” “ Who † bounds over Lara's stream, sister of the noble Calmar ? Does not Alcletha behold his spear ? But her eyes are dim ! Is it not the son of Matha, daughter of my love ?”

“ It is but an aged oak, Alcletha !” replied the lovely weeping Alona ‡. “ It is but an oak, Alcletha, bent over Lara's stream. But who comes along the plain ? sorrow is in his speed. He lifts high the spear of Calmar. Alcletha, it is covered with blood !” “ But it is covered with the blood of foes §, sister of car-borne Calmar ! His spear never returned unstained with blood ! Nor his bow from the strife of the mighty. The battle is consumed in his presence : He is a flame of death, Alona ! Youth || of the mournful speed ! where is the son of Alcletha ? Does he return with his fame, in the midst of his echoing shields ? Thou art dark and silent ! Calmar is then no more ! Tell me not, warrior, how he fell.

* Ald-ela'tha, *decaying beauty* : probably a poetical name given the mother of Calmar, by the bard himself.

† Alcletha speaks. Calmar had promised to return, by a certain day, and his mother and his sister Alona are represented as looking, with impatience, towards that quarter where they expected Calmar should make his first appearance.

‡ Aluine, *exquisitely beautiful*.

§ Alcletha speaks.

|| She addresses herself to Larnir, Calmar's friend, who had returned with the news of his death.

fell. I must not hear of his wound!" Why dost thou look towards the desert, mother of low-laid Calmar?

Such was the song of Carril, when Cuthullin lay on his shield. The bards rested on their harps. Sleep fell softly around. The son of Semo was awake alone. His soul was fixed on war. The burning oaks began to decay. Faint red light is spread around. A feeble voice is heard! The ghost of Calmar came! He stalked dimly along the beam. Dark is the wound in his side. His hair is disordered and loose. Joy sits pale on his face. He seems to invite Cuthullin to his cave.

"Son of the cloudy night!" said the rising chief of Erin. "Why dost thou bend thy dark eyes on me, ghost of the noble Calmar? Wouldst thou, frighten me, O Matha's son! from the battles of Cormac? Thy hand was not feeble in war: Neither was thy voice for peace. How art thou changed, chief of Lara! if thou now dost advise to fly! But, Calmar, I never fled. I never feared the ghosts of night. Small is their knowledge, weak their hands; their dwelling is in the wind. But my soul grows in danger, and rejoices in the noise of steel. Retire thou to thy cave. Thou art not Calmar's ghost. He delighted in battle. His arm was like the thunder of heaven!" He retired in his blast with joy, for he had heard the voice of his praise.

The faint beam of the morning rose. The sound of Caithbat's buckler spread. Green Erin's warriors convened, like the roar of many streams. The horn of war is heard over Lego. The mighty Torlath came? "Why dost thou come with thy thousands, Cuthullin?" said the chief of Lego. "I know the strength of thy arm. Thy soul is in an unextinguished fire. Why fight we

not:

not on the plain, and let our hosts behold our deeds? Let them behold us like roaring waves, that tumble round a rock: the mariners hasten away, and look on their strife with fear."

"Thou risest, like the sun, on my soul," replied the son of Semo. "Thine arm is mighty, O Torlath! and worthy of my wrath. Retire, ye men of Ullin, to Slimora's shady side. Behold the chief of Erin, in the day of his fame. Carril! tell to mighty Connal, if Cuthullin must fall, tell him I accused the winds, which roar on Togorma's waves. Never was he absent in battle when the strife of my fame arose. Let his sword be before Cormac, like the beam of heaven. Let his counsel sound in Timora, in the day of danger!"

He rushed, in the sound of his arms, like the terrible spirit of Loda*, when he comes, in the roar of a thousand storms, and scatters battles from his eyes. He sits on a cloud over Lochlin's seas. His mighty hand is on his sword. Winds lift his flaming locks! The waning moon half lights his dreadful face. His features blended in darkness arise to view. So terrible was Cuthullin in the day of his fame. Torlath fell by his hand. Lego's heroes mourned. They gather around the chief, like the clouds of the desert. A thousand swords rose at once; a thousand arrows flew; but he stood like a rock in the midst of a roaring sea, They fell around. He strode in blood. Dark Slimora echoed wide. The sons of Ullin came. The battle spread over Lego. The chief of Erin overcame. He returned over the field with his fame.

* Loda, in the third book of Fingal, is mentioned as a place of worship in Scandinavia: By the *spirit of Loda*, the poet probably means Odin, the great deity of the northern nations. He is described here with all his terrors.

fame. But pale he returned ! The joy of his face was dark. He rolled his eyes in silence. The sword hung, unsheathed in his hand. His spear bent at every step !

“ Carril,” said the chief in secret, “ the strength of Cuthullin fails. My days are with the years that are past. No morning of mine shall arise. They shall seek me at Temora, but I shall not be found. Cormac will weep in his hall, and say, “ Where is Erin’s chief ? ” But my name is renowned ! my fame is in the song of bards. The youth will say in secret, O let me die as Cuthullin died ! Renown clothed him like a robe. The light of his fame is great. Draw the arrow from my side Lay Cuthullin beneath that oak. Place the shield of Caithbat near, that they may behold me amidst the arms of my fathers ! ”

“ And is the son of Semo fallen ? ” said Carril with a sigh. “ Mournful are Tura’s walls. Sorrow dwells at Dunscäi. Thy spouse is left alone in her youth. The son * of thy love is alone ! He shall come to Bragela, and ask her why she weeps ? He shall lift his eyes to the wall, and see his father’s sword. “ Whose sword is that ? ” he will say. The soul of his mother is sad. Who is that, like the hart of the desert, in the murmur of his course ? His eyes look wildly round in search of his friend. Connal, son of Colgar, where hast thou been, when the mighty fell ? Did the seas of Cogorma roll around thee ? Was the wind of the south in thy sails ? The mighty have fallen in battle, and thou wast not there. Let none tell it in Selma, nor in Morven’s woody land.

* Conloch, who was afterwards very famous for his great exploits in Ireland. He was so remarkable for his dexterity in handling the javelin, that when a good marksman is described, it had passed into a proverb, in the north of Scotland, *He is unerring as the arm of Conloch.*

land. Fingal will be sad, and the sons of the desert mourn !”

By the dark rolling waves of Lego they raised the hero's tomb. Luäth *, at a distance, lies. The song of bards rose over the dead.

“ Blest † be thy soul, son of Semo ! Thou wert mighty in battle. Thy strength was like the strength of a stream : thy speed like the eagle's wing. Thy path in battle was terrible : the steps of death were behind thy sword. Blest be thy soul, son of Semo, car-borne chief of Dunscäi ! Thou hast not fallen by the sword of the mighty, neither was thy blood on the spear of the brave. The arrow came, like the sting of death in a blast : nor did the feeble hand, which drew the bow, perceive it. Peace to thy soul, in thy cave, chief of the isle of mist !”

“ The mighty are dispersed at Temora : there is none in Cormac's hall. The king mourns in his youth. He does not behold thy return. The sound of thy shield is ceased : his foes are gathering round. Soft be thy rest in thy cave, chief of Erin's wars ! Bragéla will not hope for thy return, or see thy sails in ocean's foam. Her steps are not on the shore : nor her ear open to the voice of thy rowers. She sits in the hall of shells. She sees the arms of him that is no more. Thine eyes are full of tears, daughter of car-borne Sorglan ! Blest by thy soul in death, O chief of shady Tura !”

* It was of old the custom to bury the favourite dog near the master. This was not peculiar to the ancient Scots, for we find it practised by many other nations in their ages of heroism. There is a stone shewn still at Dunscäi, in the isle of Sky, to which Cuthullin commonly bound his dog Luath. The stone goes by his name to this day.

† This is the song of the bards over Cuthullin's tomb. Every stanza closes with some remarkable title of the hero, which was always the custom in funeral elegies.

DAR-THULA:

A

P O E M.

VOL. I.

H

ARGUMENT.

It may not be improper here, to give the story which is the foundation of this poem, as it is handed down by tradition. Usnoth lord of Etha, which is probably that part of Argyleshire which is near Loch Eta, an arm of the sea in Lorn, had three sons, Nathos, Althos, and Ardan, by Sliffama, the daughter of Semo and sister to the celebrated Cuthullin. The three brothers, when very young, were sent over to Ireland, by their father, to learn the use of arms, under their uncle Cuthullin, who made a great figure in that kingdom. They were just landed in Ulster when the news of Cuthullin's death arrived. Nathos, though very young, took the command of Cuthullin's army, made head against Cairbar the usurper, and defeated him in several battles. Cairbar at last having found means to murder Cormac the lawful king, the army of Nathos shifted sides, and he himself was obliged to return into Ulster, in order to pass over into Scotland.

Darthula, the daughter of Colla, with whom Cairbar was in love, resided, at that time, in Selama, a castle in Ulster: She saw, fell in love, and fled with Nathos; but a storm rising at sea, they were unfortunately driven back on that part of the coast of Ulster where Cairbar was encamped with his army. The three brothers, after having defended themselves, for some time, with great bravery, were overpowered and slain, and the unfortunate Darthula killed herself upon the body of her beloved Nathos.

The poem opens, on the night preceding the death of the sons of Usnoth, and brings in, by way of episode, what passed before. It relates the death of Darthula differently from the common tradition; this account is the most probable, as suicide seems to have been unknown in those early times: For no traces of it are found in the old poetry.

DARTHULA:

A

POEM.

DAUGHTER of heaven, fair art thou! the silence of thy face is pleasant! Thou comest forth in loveliness. The stars attend thy blue course in the east. The clouds rejoice in thy presence, O moon! They brighten their dark-brown sides. Who is like thee in heaven, light of the silent night? The stars are ashamed in thy presence. They turn away their sparkling eyes. Whither dost thou retire from thy course, when the darkness of thy countenance grows? Hast thou thy hall, like Ossian? Dwellest thou in the shadow of grief? Have thy sisters fallen from heaven? Are they who rejoiced with thee, at night, no more? Yes! they have fallen, fair light! and thou dost often retire to mourn. But thou thyself shall fail, one night; and leave thy blue path in heaven. The stars will then lift their heads: They, who were ashamed in thy presence, will rejoice. Thou art now clothed with thy brightness. Look from thy gates in the sky. Burst the cloud, O wind! that the daughter of night may look forth! that the shaggy mountains may brighten, and the ocean rolls its white waves, in light.

Nathos * is on the deep, and Althos, that beam of youth. Ardan is near his brothers. They move in the gloom of their course. The sons of Ufnoth move in darkness, from the wrath of Cairbar † of Erin. Who is that, dim by their side? The night has covered her beauty! Her hair sighs on ocean's wind. Her robe streams in dusky wreaths. She is like the fair spirit of heaven in the midst of his shadowy mist. Who is it but Dar-thula ‡, the first of Erin's maids? She has fled from the love of Cairbar, with blue-shielded Nathos. But the winds deceive thee, O Dar-thula! They deny the woody Etha, to thy sails. These are not the mountains of Nathos; nor is that the roar of his climbing waves. The halls of Cairbar are near: The towers of the foe lift their heads! Erin stretches its green head into the sea. Tura's bay receives the ship. Where have ye been, ye southern winds! when the sons of my love were deceived? But ye have been sporting on plains, pursuing the thistle's beard. O that ye had been rustling in the sails of Nathos, till the hills of Etha arose! till they arose in their clouds, and saw their returning chief! Long hast thou been absent, Nathos! The day of thy return is past!

But the land of strangers saw thee, lovely! thou wast lovely in the eyes of Dar-thula. Thy face

* Nathos signifies *youthful*, Ailthos, *exquisite beauty*, Ardan, *bride*.

† Cairbar who murdered Cormac king of Ireland, and usurped the throne. He was afterwards killed by Oíscar the son of Ossian in a single combat. The poet, upon other occasions, gives him the epithet of red-haired.

‡ Dar-thula, or Dart-huile, *a woman with fine eyes*. She was the most famous beauty of antiquity. To this day, when a woman is praised for her beauty, the common phrase is, *that she is as lovely as Dar-thula*.

face was like the light of the morning. Thy hair like the raven's wing. Thy soul was generous and mild, like the hour of the setting sun. Thy words were the gale of the reeds; the gliding stream of Lora! But when the rage of battle rose, thou wast a sea in a storm. The clang of thy arms was terrible: The host vanished at the sound of thy course. It was then Dar-thula beheld thee, from the top of her mossy tower: From the tower of Selama*, where her fathers dwelt.

“Lovely art thou, O stranger!” she said, for her trembling soul arose. “Fair art thou in thy battles, friend of the fallen Corimac†! Why dost thou rush on, in thy valour, youth of the ruddy look? Few are thy hands, in fight, against the dark-browed Cairbar! O that I might be freed from his love‡! that I might rejoice in the presence of Nathos! Blest are the rocks of Etha! They will behold his steps at the chace! they will see his white bosom, when the winds lift his flowing hair!” Such were thy words, Dar-thula, in Selama’s mossy towers. But, now, the night is around thee. The winds have deceived thy sails. The winds have deceived thy sails, Dar-thula! Their blustering sound is high. Cease a little while, O north wind! Let me hear the voice of the lovely. Thy voice is lovely, Dar-thula, between the rustling blasts!

H 3

“Are

* The word signifies either *beautiful to behold*, or a place *with a pleasant or wide prospect*. In early times, they built their houses upon eminences, to command a view of the country, and to prevent their being surprised: Many of them, on that account, were called Selama. The famous Selma of Fingal is derived from the same root.

† Cormac the young king of Ireland, who was privately murdered by Cairbar.

‡ That is, of the love of Cairbar.

“ Are these the rocks of Nathos ?” she said, “ This the roar of his mountain-streams ? Comes that beam of light from Ufnoth’s nightly hall ? The mist spreads around ; the beam is feeble and distant far. But the light of Dar-thula’s soul dwells in the chief of Etha ! Son of the generous Ufnoth, why that broken sigh ? Are we in the land of strangers, chief of echoing Etha !”

“ These are not the rocks of Nathos,” he replied, “ nor this the roar of his streams. No light comes from Etha’s hall, for they are distant far. We are in the land of strangers, in the land of cruel Cairbar. The winds have deceived us, Dar-thula. Erin lifts here her hills. Go towards the north, Althos : Be thy steps, Ardán, along the coast ; that the foe may not come in darkness, and our hopes of Etha fail.” “ I will go towards that mossy tower, to see who dwells about the beam. Rest, Dar-thula, on the shore ! rest in peace, thou lovely light ! the sword of Nathos is around thee, like the lightning of heaven !”

He went. She sat alone ; she heard the rolling of the wave. The big tear is in her eye. She looks for returning Nathos. Her soul trembles at the blast. She turns her ear towards the tread of his feet. The tread of his feet is not heard. “ Where art thou, son of my love ! The roar of the blast is around me. Dark is the cloudy night. But Nathos does not return. What detains thee, chief of Etha ? Have the foes met the hero in the strife of the night ?”

He returned, but his face was dark. He had seen his departed friend ! It was the wall of Tura. The ghost of Cuthullin stalked there alone : The fighting of his breast was frequent. The decayed flame of his eyes was terrible ! His spear was a
column

column of mist. The stars looked dim through his form. His voice was like hollow wind in a cave : His eye a light seen afar. He told the tale of grief. The soul of Nathos was sad, like the sun in the day of mist, when his face is watery and dim.

“ Why art thou sad, O Nathos ? ” said the lovely daughter of Colla. “ Thou art a pillar of light to Dar-thula. The joy of her eyes is in Etha’s chief. Where is my friend, but Nathos ? My father, my brother is fallen ! Silence dwells on Selama. Sadness spreads on the blue streams of my land. My friends have fallen, with Cormac. The mighty were slain in the battles of Erin. Hear, son of Ufnoth ! hear, O Nathos ! my tale of grief.

“ Evening darkened on the plain. The blue streams failed before mine eyes. The unfrequent blast came rustling, in the tops of Selama’s groves. My seat was beneath a tree, on the walls of my fathers. Truthil past before my soul : the brother of my love : He that was absent in battle, against the haughty Cairbar ! Bending on his spear, the grey-haired Colla came. His downcast face is dark, and sorrow dwells in his soul. His sword is on the side of the hero : the helmet of his fathers on his head. The battle grows in his breast. He strives to hide the tear.”

“ Dar-thula, my daughter,” he said, “ thou art the last of Colla’s race ! Truthil is fallen in battle. The chief of Selama is no more ! Cairbar comes, with his thousands, towards Selama’s walls. Colla will meet his pride, and revenge his son. But where shall I find thy safety, Dar-thula with the dark-brown hair ! thou art lovely

as the sun-beam of heaven, and thy friends are low !” “ Is the son of battle fallen,” I said, with a bursting sigh ? “ Ceased the generous soul of Truthil to lighten through the field ? My safety, Colla, is in that bow. I have learned to pierce the deer. Is not Cairbar, like the hart of the desert, father of fallen Truthil ?”

The face of age brightened with joy. The crowded tears of his eyes poured down. The lips of Colla trembled. His grey beard whistled in the blast. “ Thou art the sister of Truthil,” he said ; “ thou burnest in the fire of his soul. Take, Dar-thula, take that spear, that brazen shield, that burnished helm : They are the spoils of a warrior, a son of early youth ! When the light rises on Selama, we go to meet the car-borne Cairbar. But keep thou near the arm of Colla, beneath the shadow of my shield. Thy father, Dar-thula, could once defend thee ; but age is trembling on his hand. The strength of his arm has failed. His soul is darkened with grief.”

We passed the night in sorrow. The light of morning rose. I shone in the arms of battle. The grey-haired hero moved before. The sons of Selama convened, around the founding shield of Colla. But few were they in the plain, and their locks were grey. The youths had fallen with Truthil, in the battle of car-borne Cormac. “ Friends of my youth !” said Colla, “ it was not thus you have seen me in arms. It was not thus I strode to battle, when the great Confaden fell. But ye are laden with grief. The darkness of age comes like the mist of the desert. My shield is worn with years ! my sword

sword is fixed * in its place ! I said to my soul, thy evening shall be calm : Thy departure like a fading light. But the storm has returned. I bend like an aged oak My boughs are fallen on Selama. I tremble in my place. Where art thou, with thy fallen heroes, O my beloved Truthil ! Thou answerest not from thy rushing blast. The soul of thy father is sad. But I will be sad no more, Cairbar or Colla must fall ! I feel the returning strength of my arm. My heart leaps at the sound of war."

" The hero drew his sword. The gleaming blades of his people rose. They moved along the plain. Their grey hair streamed in the wind. Cairbar sat at the feast, in the silent plain of Lona †. He saw the coming of the heroes. He called his chiefs to war. Why ‡ should I tell to Nathos, how the strife of battle grew ? I have seen thee, in the midst of thousands, like the beam of heaven's fire : It is beautiful, but terrible ; the people fall in its dreadful course. The spear of Colla flew. He remembered the battles of his youth. An arrow came with its sound. It pierced the hero's side. He fell on

H 5

his

* It was the custom of ancient times, that every warrior, at a certain age, or when he became unfit for the field, fixed his arms in the great hall, where the tribe feasted upon joyful occasions. He was afterwards never to appear in battle ; and this stage of life was called the *time of fixing of the arms*.

† Lona, a marshy plain. Cairbar had just provided an entertainment for his army, upon the defeat of Truthil the son of Colla, and the rest of the party of Cormac, when Colla and his aged warriors arrived to give him battle.

‡ The poet, by an artifice, avoids the description of the battle of Lona, as it would be improper in the mouth of a woman, and could have nothing new, after the numerous descriptions, of that kind, in the rest of the poems. He, at the same time, gives an opportunity to Dar-thula to pass a fine compliment on her lover.

his echoing shield. My soul started with fear. I stretched my buckler over him; but my heaving breast was seen! Cairbar came, with his spear. He beheld Selama's maid. Joy rose on his dark-brown face. He stayed the lifted steel. He raised the tomb of Colla. He brought me weeping to Selama. He spoke the words of love, but my soul was sad. I saw the shields of my fathers; the sword of car-borne Truthil. I saw the arms of the dead; the tear was on my cheek! Then thou didst come, O Nathos! and gloomy Cairbar fled. He fled like the ghost of the desert before the morning's beam. His host was not near; and feeble was his arm against thy steel! Why art thou sad, O Nathos! said the lovely daughter of Colla?"

"I have met," replied the hero, "the battle in my youth. My arm could not lift the spear, when danger first arose. My soul brightened in the presence of war, as the green narrow vale, when the sun pours his streamy beams, before he hides his head in a storm. The lonely traveller feels a mournful joy. He sees the darkness, that slowly comes. My soul brightened in danger before I saw Selama's fair; before I saw thee, like a star, that shines on the hill, at night: The cloud advances, and threatens the lovely light! We are in the land of foes. The winds have deceived us, Dar-thula! The strength of our friends is not near, nor the mountains of Etha. Where shall I find thy peace, daughter of mighty Colla! The brothers of Nathos are brave! and his own sword has shone in fight. But what are the sons of Ufnoth to the host of dark-browed Cairbar! O that the winds

winds had brought thy sails, Oscar * king of men ! Thou didst promise to come to the battles of fallen Cormac ! Then would my hand be strong, as the flaming arm of death. Cairbar would tremble in his halls, and peace dwell round the lovely Dar-thula. But why dost thou fall, my soul ? The sons of Ufnoth may prevail !”

“ And they will prevail, O Nathos !” said the rising soul of the maid. “ Never shall Dar-thula behold the halls of gloomy Cairbar. Give me those arms of brass, that glitter to the passing meteor. I see them dimly in the dark-bosomed ship. Dar-thula will enter the battle of steel. Ghost of the noble Colla ! do I behold thee on that cloud ? Who is that dim beside thee ? Is it the car-borne Truthil ? Shall I behold the halls of him that slew Selama’s chief ? No : I will not behold them, spirits of my love !”

Joy rose in the face of Nathos, when he heard the white-bosomed maid. “ Daughter of Selama ! thou shinest along my soul. Come, with thy thousands, Cairbar ! the strength of Nathos is returned ! Thou, O aged Ufnoth ! shalt not hear that thy son has fled. I remember thy words on Etha ; when my sails began to rise : When I spread them towards Erin, towards the mossy walls of Tura ! “ Thou goest,” he said, “ O Nathos, to the king of shields ! Thou goest to Cuthullin, chief of men, who never fled from danger. Let not thine arm be feeble ; neither be thy thoughts of flight, lest the son of Semo
H 6 should

* Oscar, the son of Ossian, had long resolved on the expedition into Ireland, against Cairbar, who had assassinated his friend Cathol, the son of Moran, an Irishman of noble extraction, and in the interest of the family of Cormac.

should say, that Etha's race are weak. His words may come to Ufnoth, and sadden his soul in the hall." The tear was on my father's cheek. He gave this shining sword !

" I came to Tura's bay ; but the halls of Tura were silent. I looked around, and there was none to tell of the son of generous Semo. I went to the hall of shells, where the arms of his fathers hung. But the arms were gone, and aged Lamhor* sat in tears. " Whence are the arms of steel ?" said the rising Lamhor. " The light of the spear has long been absent from Tura's dusky walls. Come ye from the rolling sea ? Or from Temora's† mournful halls ?"

" We come from the sea," I said, " from Ufnoth's rising towers. We are the sons of Slis-sama‡, the daughter of car-borne Semo. Where is Tura's chief, son of the silent hall ? But why should Nathos ask ? for I behold thy tears. How did the mighty fall, son of the lonely Tura ?" " He fell not," Lamhor replied, " like the silent star of night, when it flies through darkness and is no more. But he was like a meteor that shoots into a distant land. Death attends its dreary course. Itself is the sign of wars. Mournful are the banks of Lego ; and the roar of streamy Lara ! There the hero fell, son of the noble Ufnoth !" " The hero fell in the midst of slaughter," I said with a bursting sigh.

* Lamh-mhor, *mighty hand*.

† Temora was the residence of the supreme kings of Ireland. It is here called mournful, on account of the death of Cormac, who was murdered there by Cairbar, who usurped his throne.

‡ Slis-seamha, *soft bosom*. She was the wife of Ufnoth, and daughter of Semo the chief of the *isle of mist*.

figh. "His hand was strong in war. Death dimly sat behind his sword."

We came to Lego's sounding banks. We found his rising tomb. His friends in battle are there: His bards of many songs. Three days we mourned over the hero: On the fourth, I struck the shield of Caithbat. The heroes gathered around with joy, and shook their beamy spears. Corlath was near with his host, the friend of car-borne Cairbar. We came like a stream by night. His heroes fell before us. When the people of the valley rose, they saw their blood with morning's light. But we rolled away, like wreaths of mist, to Cormac's echoing hall. Our swords rose to defend the king. But Temora's halls were empty. Cormac had fallen in his youth. The king of Erin was no more!

Sadness seized the sons of Erin. They slowly, gloomily retired; like clouds that long having threatened rain, vanish behind the hills. The sons of Usnoth moved, in their grief, towards Tura's sounding bay. We passed by Selama. Cairbar retired like Lano's mist, when driven before the winds. It was then I beheld thee, O Dar-thula! like the light of Etha's sun. "Lovely is that beam!" I said. The crowded sigh of my bosom rose. "Thou camest in thy beauty, Dar-thula, to Etha's mournful chief. But the winds have deceived us, daughter of Colla, and the foe is near!"

"Yes, the foe is near," said the rushing strength of Althos*. I heard their clanging
arms

* Althos had just returned from viewing the coast of Lena, whither he had been sent by Nathos, the beginning of the night.

arms on the coast. I saw the dark wreaths of Erin's standard. Distinct is the voice of Cairbar *. Loud as Cromla's falling stream. He had seen the dark ship on the sea, before the dusky night came down. His people watch on Lena's plain. They lift ten thousand swords." "And let them lift ten thousand swords," said Nathos with a smile. The sons of car-borne Ufnóth will never tremble in danger! Why dost thou roll with all thy foam, thou roaring sea of Erin? Why do ye rustle, on your dark wings, ye whistling storms of the sky? Do ye think, ye storms, that ye keep Nathos on the coast? No: His soul detains him, children of the night! Althos! bring my father's arms: Thou seest them beaming to the stars. Bring the spear of Semo †. It stands in the dark-bosomed ship!"

He brought the arms. Nathos covered his limbs, in all their shining steel. The stride of the chief is lovely. The joy of his eyes was terrible. He looks towards the coming of Cairbar. The wind is rustling in his hair. Dar-thula is silent at his side. Her look is fixed on the chief. She strives to hide the rising sigh. Two tears swell in her radiant eyes!

"Althos!" said the chief of Etha, "I see a cave in that rock. Place Dar-thula there. Let thy

* Cairbar had gathered an army to the coast of Ulster, in order to oppose Fingal, who prepared for an expedition into Ireland to re-establish the house of Cormac on the throne, which Cairbar had usurped. Between the wings of Cairbar's army was the bay of Tura, into which the ship of the sons of Ufnóth was driven; so that there was no possibility of their escaping.

† Semo was grandfather to Nathos by the mother's side. The spear mentioned here was given to Ufnóth on his marriage, it being the custom then for the father of the lady to give his arms to his son-in-law.

thy arm, my brother, be strong. Ardan! we meet the foe; call to battle gloomy Cairbar. O that he came in his sounding steel, to meet the son of Ufnoth! Dar-thula! if thou shalt escape, look not on the fallen Nathos! Lift thy sails, O Althos! towards the echoing groves of my land.

“Tell the chief*, that his son fell with fame; that my sword did not shun the fight. Tell him I fell in the midst of thousands. Let the joy of his grief be great. Daughter of Colla! call the maids to Etha’s echoing hall! Let their songs arise for Nathos, when shadowy autumn returns. O that the voice of Cona, that Ossian, might be heard in my praise! then would my spirit rejoice in the midst of the rushing winds.” “And my voice shall praise thee, Nathos, chief of the woody Etha! The voice of Ossian shall rise in thy praise, son of the generous Ufnoth! Why was I not on Lena, when the battle rose? Then would the sword of Ossian defend thee; or himself fall low!”

We sat, that night, in Selma round the strength of the shell. The wind was abroad in the oaks. The spirit of the mountain† roared. The blast came rustling through the hall, and gently touched my harp. The sound was mournful and low, like the song of the tomb. Fingal heard it the first. The crowded sighs of his bosom rose. “Some of my heroes are low,” said the grey-haired king of Morven. “I hear the sound of death on the harp. Ossian, touch the trembling string. Bid the sorrow rise; that their
their

* Ufnoth.

† By the spirit of the mountain is meant, that deep and melancholy sound which precedes a storm; well known to those who live in a high country.

their spirits may fly, with joy, to Morven's woody hills!" I touched the harp before the king, the sound was mournful and low. "Bend forward from your clouds," I said, "ghosts of my fathers! bend. Lay by the red terror of your course. Receive the falling chief; whether he comes from a distant land, or rises from the rolling sea. Let his robe of mist be near; his spear that is formed of a cloud. Place an half-extinguished meteor by his side, in the form of the hero's sword. And, Oh! let his countenance be lovely, that his friends may delight in his presence. Bend from your clouds," I said, "ghosts of my fathers! bend!"

Such was my song, in Selma, to the lightly-trembling harp. But Nathos was on Erin's shore, surrounded by the night. He heard the voice of the foe, amidst the roar of tumbling waves. Silent he heard their voice, and rested on his spear! Morning rose, with its beams. The sons of Erin appear, like grey rocks, with all their trees, they spread along the coast. Cairbar stood in the midst. He grimly smiled when he saw the foe. Nathos rushed forward, in his strength; nor could Dar-thula stay behind. She came with the hero, lifting her shining spear. "And who are these, in their armour, in the pride of youth? Who but the sons of Ufnoth, Althos, and dark-haired Ardan?"

"Come," said Nathos, "come! chief of high Temora! Let our battle be on the coast, for the white-bosomed maid. His people are not with Nathos; they are behind these rolling seas. Why dost thou bring thy thousands against the chief of Etha? Thou didst fly* from him in battle,

* He alludes to the flight of Cairbar from Selama.

battle, when his friends were around his spear.”
“ Youth of the heart of pride, shall Erin’s king
fight with thee? Thy fathers were not among
the renowned, nor of the kings of men. Are
the arms of foes in their halls? Or the shields of
other times? Cairbar is renowned in Temora,
nor does he fight with feeble men!”

The tear started from car-borne Nathos. He
turned his eyes to his brothers. Their spears
flew at once. Three heroes lay on earth. Then
the light of their swords gleamed on high. The
ranks of Erin yield; as a ridge of dark clouds
before a blast of wind! Then Cairbar ordered
his people, and they drew a thousand bows. A
thousand arrows flew. The sons of Ufnath fell
in blood. They fell like three young oaks, which
stood alone on the hill: The traveller saw the
lovely trees, and wondered how they grew so
lonely: The blast of the desert came, by night,
and laid their green heads low; next day he re-
turned, but they were withered, and the heath
was bare!

Dar-thula stood in silent grief, and beheld
their fall! No tear is in her eye. But her look
is wildly sad. Pale was her cheek. Her trem-
bling lips broke short an half-formed word. Her
dark hair flew on wind. The gloomy Cairbar
came. “ Where is thy lover now? The car-
borne chief of Etha? Hast thou beheld the halls
of Ufnath? Or the dark-brown hills of Fingal?
My battle would have roared on Morven, had
not the winds met Dar-thula. Fingal himself
would have been low, and sorrow dwelling in
Selma!” Her shield fell from Dar-thula’s arm.
Her breast of snow appeared. It appeared; but
it was stained with blood. An arrow was fixed
in her side. She fell on the fallen Nathos, like a
wreath

wreath of snow! Her hair spreads wide on his face. Their blood is mixing round!

“ Daughter of Colla! thou art low!” said Cairbar’s hundred bards. “ Silence is at the blue streams of Selama. Truthil’s * race have failed. When wilt thou rise in thy beauty, first of Erin’s maids? Thy sleep is long in the tomb. The morning distant far. The sun shall not come to thy bed, and say, “ Awake, Dar-thula! awake, thou first of women! The wind of spring is abroad. The flowers shake their heads on the green hills. The woods wave their growing leaves. Retire, O sun! The daughter of Colla is asleep. She will not come forth in her beauty. She will not move in the steps of her loveliness!”

Such was the song of the bards, when they raised the tomb. I sung over the grave, when the king of Morven came; when he came to green Erin to fight with car-borne Cairbar!

* Truthil was the founder of Dar-thula’s family.

CARRIC-THURA:

A

P O E M.

ARGUMENT.

Fingal, returning from an expedition which he had made into the Roman province, resolved to visit Cathulla king of Inistore, and brother to Comala, whose story is related at large in a preceding dramatic poem. Upon his coming in sight of Carric-thura, the palace of Cathulla, he observed a flame on its top, which, in those days, was a signal of distress. The wind drove him into a bay, at some distance from Carric-thura, and he was obliged to pass the night on the shore. Next day he attacked the army of Frothal king of Sora, who had besieged Cathulla in his palace of Carric-thura, and took Frothal himself prisoner, after he had engaged him in a single combat. The deliverance of Carric-thura is the subject of the poem; but several other episodes are interwoven with it. It appears from tradition, that this poem was addressed to a Culdee, or one of the first Christian missionaries, and that the story of the *Spirit of Loda*, supposed to be the ancient Odin of Scandinavia, was introduced by Ossian in opposition to the Culdee's doctrine. Be this as it will, it lets us into Ossian's notions of a superior being; and shews that he was not addicted to the superstition which prevailed all the world over, before the introduction of Christianity.

CARRIC-THURA:

A

POEM.

H^AST * thou left thy blue course in heaven, golden-haired son of the sky? The west has opened its gates; the bed of thy repose is there. The waves come to behold thy beauty. They lift their trembling heads. They see thee, lovely in thy sleep; they shrink away with fear. Rest, in thy shadowy cave, O sun! Let thy return be in joy.

But let a thousand lights arise to the sound of the harps of Selma: Let the beam spread in the hall, the king of shells is returned! The strife of Carun is past †, like sounds that are no more. Raise the song, O bards! the king is returned, with his fame!

Such were the words of Ullin, when Fingal returned from war; when he returned in the fair blushing of youth, with all his heavy locks. His blue arms were on the hero; like a light cloud on the sun when he moves in his robes of mist, and shews but half his beams. His heroes follow the king:

* The song of Ullin, with which the poem opens, is in a lyric measure. It was usual with Fingal, when he returned from his expeditions, to send his bards singing before him. This species of triumph is called, by Ossian, the *song of victory*.

† Ossian has celebrated the *strife of Crona* in a particular poem. This poem is connected with it; but it was impossible for the translator to procure that part which relates to Crona with any degree of purity.

king : The feast of shells is spread. Fingal turns to his bards, and bids the song to rise.

Voices of echoing Cona ! he said, O bards of other times ! Ye, on whose souls the blue hosts of our fathers rise ! Strike the harp in my hall ; and let me hear the song. Pleasant is the joy of grief ! It is like the shower of spring, when it softens the branch of the oak, and the young leaf rears its green head. Sing on, O bards ! to-morrow we lift the sail. My blue course is through the ocean, to Carric-thura's walls ; the mossy walls of Sarno, where Comala dwelt. There the noble Cathulla spreads the feast of shells. The boars of his woods are many ; the sound of the chace shall arise !

Cronnan *, son of the song ! said Ullin, Minona, graceful at the harp ! raise the tale of Shilric to please the king of Morven. Let Vinvela come in her beauty, like the showery bow, when it shews its lovely head on the lake, and the setting sun is bright. She comes, O Fingal ! Her voice is soft but sad.

VINVELA. My love is a son of the hill. He pursues the flying deer. His grey dogs are panting around him ; his bow-string sounds in the wind. Dost thou rest by the fount of the rock, or by the noise of the mountain-stream ? The rushes are nodding to the wind, the mist flies over the hill. I will approach my love unseen ; I will behold him from the rock. Lovely I saw thee

* One should think that the parts of Shilric and Vinvela were represented by Cronnan and Minona, whose very names denote that they were singers, who performed in public. Cronnan signifies *a mournful sound*, Minona, or Minon, *soft air*. All the dramatic poems of Ossian appear to have been presented before Fingal, upon solemn occasions.

thee first by the aged oak of Branno *; thou wert returning tall from the chace; the fairest among thy friends.

SHILRIC. What voice is that I hear? That voice like the summer-wind! I sit not by the nodding rushes; I hear not the fount of the rock. Afar, Vinvela †, afar, I go to the wars of Fingal. My dogs attend me no more. No more I tread the hill. No more from on high I see thee, fair-moving by the stream of the plain; bright as the bow of heaven; as the moon on the western wave.

VINVELA. Then thou art gone, O Shilric! I am alone on the hill! The deer are seen on the brow; void of fear they graze along. No more they dread the wind; no more the rustling tree. The hunter is far removed; he is in the field of graves. Strangers! sons of the waves! spare my lovely Shilric!

SHILRIC. If fall I must in the field, raise high my grave, Vinvela. Grey stones, and heap-ed-up earth, shall mark me to future times. When the hunter shall sit by the mound, and produce his food at noon, "Some warrior rests here," he will say; and my fame shall live in his praise. Remember me, Vinvela, when low on earth I lie!

VINVELA. Yes! I will remember thee; alas! my Shilric will fall! What shall I do, my love! when thou art for ever gone? Through these

* Bran, or Branno, signifies a *mountain stream*: It is here some river known by that name in the days of Ossian. There are several small rivers in the north of Scotland still retaining the name of Bran; in particular, one which falls into the Tay at Dunkeld.

† Bhin bheul, a *woman with a melodious voice*. Bb, in the Galic language, has the same sound with the *w* in English.

these hills I will go at noon: I will go through the silent heath. There I will see the place of thy rest, returning from the chace. Alas! my Shilric will fall; but I will remember Shilric.

And I remember the chief, said the king of woody Morven; he consumed the battle in his rage. But now my eyes behold him not. I met him, one day, on the hill; his cheek was pale; his brow was dark. The sigh was frequent in his breast: His steps were towards the desert. But now he is not in the crowd of my chiefs, when the sounds of my shields arise. Dwells he in the narrow house *, the chief of high Carmora †?

Cronnan! said Ullin of other times, raise the song of Shilric; when he returned to his hills, and Vinvela was no more. He leaned on her grey mossy stone; he thought Vinvela lived. He saw her fair moving ‡ on the plain: But the bright form lasted not: The sun-beam fled from the field, and she was seen no more. Hear the song of Shilric, it is soft but sad!

I sit by the mossy fountain; on the top of the hill of winds. One tree is rustling above me. Dark waves roll over the heath. The lake is troubled below. The deer descend from the hill. No hunter at a distance is seen. It is mid-day; but all is silent. Sad are my thoughts alone. Didst thou but appear, O my love! a wanderer on the heath! thy hair floating on the wind behind thee; thy bosom heaving on the sight; thine eyes full of tears for thy friends, whom the mist
of

* The grave.

† Carn-mor, *high rocky bill*.

‡ The distinction which the ancient Scots made between good and bad spirits, was, that the former appeared sometimes in the day time in lonely unfrequented places, but the latter never but by night, and in a dismal gloomy scene.

of the hill had concealed ! Thee I would comfort,
my love, and bring thee to thy father's house !

But is it she that there appears, like a beam of
light on the heath ? bright as the moon in au-
tumn, as the sun in a summer-storm, comest thou,
O maid, over rocks, over mountains, to me ?
She speaks ; but how weak her voice ! like the
breeze in the reeds of the lake.

“ Returnest thou safe from the war ? Where
are thy friends, my love ? I heard of thy death
on the hill ; I heard and mourned thee, Shilric !
Yes, my fair, I return ; but I alone of my race.
Thou shalt see them no more : Their graves I
raised on the plain. But why art thou on the
desart hill ? Why on the heath alone ?

“ Alone I am, O Shilric ! alone in the winter
house. With grief for thee I fell. Shilric, I
am pale in the tomb.”

She fleets, she fails away ; as mist before the
wind ! And, wilt thou not stay, Vinvela ? Stay
and behold my tears ! Fair thou appearest, Vin-
vela ! Fair thou wast, when alive !

By the mossy fountain I will sit ; on the top of
the hill of winds. When mid-day is silent around,
O talk with me, Vinvela ! Come on the light-
winged gale ! on the breeze of the desart, come !
Let me hear thy voice, as thou passest, when
mid-day is silent around !

Such was the song of Cronnan, on the night
of Selma's joy. But morning rose in the east ;
the blue waters rolled in light. Fingal bade his
sails to rise ; the winds came rustling from their
hills. Inistore rose to fight, and Carric-thu-
ra's mossy towers ! But the sign of distress was
on their top : The warning flame edged with
smoke. The king of Morven struck his breast :
He assumed, at once, his spear. His darkened

brow bends forward to the coast: He looks back to the lagging winds. His hair is disordered on his back. The silence of the king is terrible!

Night came down on the sea; Rotha's bay received the ship. A rock bends along the coast with all its echoing wood. On the top is the circle* of Loda, the mossy stone of power! A narrow plain spreads beneath, covered with grass and aged trees, which the midnight winds, in their wrath, had torn from the shaggy rock. The blue course of a stream is there! The lonely blast of ocean pursues the thistle's beard. The flame of three oaks arose: The feast is spread around: But the soul of the king is sad, for Carric-thura's chief distrest.

The wan, cold moon rose, in the east. Sleep descended on the youths! Their blue helmets glitter to the beam; the fading fire decays. But sleep did not rest on the king: He rose in the midst of his arms, and slowly ascended the hill, to behold the flame of Sarno's tower.

The flame was dim and distant; the moon hid her red face in the east. A blast came from the mountain, on its wings was the spirit of Loda. He came to his place in his terrors†, and shook his dusky spear. His eyes appear like flames in his dark face; his voice is like distant thunder. Fingal advanced his spear in night, and raised his voice on high.

Son of night, retire: Call thy winds, and fly! Why dost thou come to my presence, with thy shadowy arms? Do I fear thy gloomy form, spirit

* *The circle of Loda* is supposed to be a place of worship among the Scandinavians, as the spirit of Loda is thought to be the same with their god Odin.

† He is described, in a simile, in the poem concerning the death of Cuthullin.

rit of dismal Loda? Weak is thy shield of clouds: Feeble is that meteor, thy sword! The blast rolls them together; and thou thyself art lost. Fly from my presence, son of night! call thy winds and fly!

Dost thou force me from my place, replied the hollow voice? The people bend before me. I turn the battle in the field of the brave. I look on the nations, and they vanish: My nostrils pour the blast of death. I come abroad on the winds: The tempests are before my face. But my dwelling is calm, above the clouds; the fields of my rest are pleasant.

Dwell in thy pleasant fields, said the king: Let Comhal's son be forgot. Do my steps ascend, from my hills, into thy peaceful plains? Do I meet thee, with a spear, on thy cloud, spirit of dismal Loda? Why then dost thou frown on me? why shake thine airy spear? Thou frownest in vain: I never fled from the mighty in war. And shall the sons of the wind frighten the king of Morven? No: He knows the weakness of their arms!

Fly to thy land, replied the form: Receive the wind, and fly! The blasts are in the hollow of my hand: The course of the storm is mine. The king of Sora is my son, he bends at the stone of my power. His battle is around Carric-thura; and he will prevail! Fly to thy land, son of Cromhal, or feel my flaming wrath!

He lifted high his shadowy spear! He bent forward his dreadful height. Fingal, advancing, drew his sword; the blade of dark-brown Luno*. The gleaming path of the steel winds
I 2 thro'

* The famous sword of Fingal, made by Lun, or Luno, a smith of Lochlin.

thro' the gloomy ghost. The form fell shapeless into air, like a column of smoke, which the staff of the boy disturbs, as it rises from the half extinguished furnace.

The spirit of Loda shrieked, as, rolled into himself, he rose on the wind. Inistore shook at the sound. The waves heard it on the deep. They stopped, in their course, with fear: The friends of Fingal started, at once; and took their heavy spears. They missed the king: They rose in rage; all their arms resound!

The moon came forth in the east. Fingal returned in the gleam of his arms. The joy of his youth was great, their souls settled, as a sea from a storm. Ullin raised the song of gladness. The hills of Inistore rejoiced. The flame of the oak arose; and the tales of heroes are told.

But Frothal, Sora's wrathful king, sits in sadness beneath a tree. The host spreads around Carric-thura. He looks towards the walls with rage. He longs for the blood of Cathulla, who, once, overcame him in war. When Annir reigned * in Sora, the father of sea-borne Frothal, a storm arose on the sea, and carried Frothal to Inistore. Three days he feasted in Sarno's halls, and saw the flow rolling eyes of Comala. He loved her, in the flame of youth, and rushed to seize the white-armed maid. Cathulla met the chief. The gloomy battle rose. Frothal was bound in the hall; three days he pined alone. On the fourth, Sarno sent him to his ship, and he returned to his land. But wrath darkened in his soul against the noble Cathulla. When Annir's

* Annir was also the father of Erragon, who was king after the death of his brother Frothal. The death of Erragon is the subject of *the battle of Lora*, a poem in this collection.

nir's stone * of fame arose, Frothal came in his strength. The battle burned round Carric-thura, and Sarno's mossy walls.

Morning rose on Inistore. Frothal struck his dark-brown shield. His chiefs started at the sound; they stood, but their eyes were turned to the sea. They saw Fingal coming in his strength; and first the noble Thubar spoke. "Who comes like the stag of the desert, with all his herd behind him? Frothal, it is a foe! I see his forward spear. Perhaps it is the king of Morven, Fingal the first of men. His deeds are well known in Lochlin: The blood of his foes is in Sarno's halls. Shall I ask the peace † of kings? His sword is the bolt of heaven!"

Son of the feeble hand, said Frothal, shall my days begin in a cloud? Shall I yield before I have conquered, chief of streamy Tora? The people would say in Sora, Frothal flew forth like a meteor; but a darkness has met him; and his fame is no more. No: Thubar, I will never yield; my fame shall surround me like light. No: I will never yield, chief of streamy Tora!

He went forth with the stream of his people, but they met a rock: Fingal stood unmoved, broken they rolled back from his side. Nor did they safely fly; the spear of the king pursued their steps. The field is covered with heroes. A rising hill preserved the foe.

Frothal saw their flight. The rage of his bosom rose. He bent his eyes to the ground, and called the noble Thubar. Thubar! my people are fled. My fame has ceased to arise. I will

I 3

fight

* That is, after the death of Annir. To erect the stone of one's fame, was, in other words, to say that the person was dead.

† Honourable terms of peace.

fight the king ; I feel my burning soul ! Send a bard to demand the combat. Speak not against Frothal's words ! But, Thubar ! I love a maid ; she dwells by Thano's stream, the white-bosomed daughter of Herman, Utha with soft-rolling eyes. She feared the low-laid Comala ; her secret sighs rose, when I spread the sail. Tell to Utha of harps, that my soul delighted in her !

Such were his words, resolved to fight. The soft sigh of Utha was near ! She had followed her hero, in the armour of a man. She rolled her eye on the youth, in secret, from beneath her steel. She saw the bard as he went ; the spear fell thrice from her hand ! Her loose hair flew on the wind. Her white breast rose, with sighs. She raised her eyes to the king. She would speak, but thrice she failed.

Fingal heard the words of the bard ; he came in the strength of his steel. They mixed their deathful spears : They raised the gleam of their arms. But the sword of Fingal descended and cut Frothal's shield in twain. His fair side is exposed ; half bent he foresees his death. Darkness gathered on Utha's soul. The tear rolled down her cheek. She rushed to cover the chief with her shield ; but a fallen oak met her steps. She fell on her arm of snow ; her shield, her helmet flew wide. Her white bosom heaved to the fight ; her dark-brown hair is spread on earth.

Fingal pitied the white-armed maid ! he stayed the uplifted sword. The tear was in the eye of the king, as, bending forward, he spoke. " King of streamy Sora ! fear not the sword of Fingal. It was never stained with the blood of the vanquished ; it never pierced a fallen foe. Let thy people rejoice by thy native streams. Let the maids of thy love be glad. Why shouldest thou fall

fall in thy youth, king of streamy Sora?" Frothal heard the words of Fingal, and saw the rising maid: They * stood in silence, in their beauty: Like two young trees of the plain, when the shower of spring is on their leaves, and the loud winds are laid.

Daughter of Herman, said Frothal, didst thou come from Tora's streams; didst thou come, in thy beauty, to behold thy warrior low? But he was low before the mighty, maid of the slow-rolling eye! The feeble did not overcome the son of car-borne Annir! Terrible art thou, O king of Morven! in battles of the spear. But, in peace, thou art like the son, when he looks thro' a silent shower: the flowers lift their fair heads before him; the gales shake their rustling wings. O that thou wert in Sora! that my feast were spread! The future kings of Sora would see thy arms and rejoice. They would rejoice at the fame of their fathers, who beheld the mighty Fingal!

Son of Annir, replied the king, the fame of Sora's race shall be heard! When chiefs are strong in war, then does the song arise! But if their swords are stretched over the feeble: If the blood of the weak has stained their arms; the bard shall forget them in the song, and their tombs shall not be known. The stranger shall come and build there, and remove the heaped-up earth. An half-worn sword shall rise before him; bending above it, he will say, "These are the arms of the chiefs of old, but their names are not in song." Come thou, O Frothal! to the feast of Inistore; let the maid of thy love be there; let our faces brighten with joy!

I 4

Fingal

* Frothal and Utha.

Fingal took his spear, moving in the steps of his might. The gates of Carric-thura are opened wide. The feast of shells is spread. The soft sound of music arose. Gladness brightened in the hall. The voice of Ullin was heard; the harp of Selma was strung. Utha rejoiced in his presence, and demanded the song of grief; the big tear hung in her eye, when the soft * Crimora spoke. Crimora the daughter of Rinval, who dwelt at Lorha's † roaring stream! The tale was long, but lovely; and pleased the blushing Utha.

CRIMORA ‡. Who cometh from the hill, like a cloud tinged with the beam of the west? Whose voice is that, loud as the wind, but pleasant as the harp of Carril ||? It is my love in the light of steel: but sad is his darkened brow! Live the mighty race of Fingal? or what darkens in Connal's soul §?

CONNAL. They live. They return from the chase, like a stream of light. The son is on their shields. Like a ridge of fire they descend the hill. Loud is the voice of the youth! the war, my love, is near! To-morrow the dreadful
Dargo

* There is a propriety in introducing this episode, as the situations of Crimora and Utha were so similar.

† Lotha was the ancient name of one of the great rivers in the north of Scotland. The only one of them that still retains a name of a like sound in Lochy, in Invernessshire: but whether it is the river mentioned here, the translator will not pretend to say.

‡ Crimora, *a woman of a great soul.*

|| Perhaps the Carril mentioned here is the same with Carril the son of Kinfena, Cuchullin's bard. The name itself is proper to any bard, as it signifies *a sprightly and harmonious sound.*

§ Connal, the son of Diaran, was one of the most famous heroes of Fingal, he was slain in a battle against Dargo a Briton; but whether by the hand of the enemy, or that of his mistress, tradition does not determine.

Dargo comes to try the force of our race. The race of Fingal he defies ; the race of battle and wounds !

CRIMORA. Connal, I saw his sails like grey mist on the dark-brown wave. They slowly came to land. Connal, many are the warriors of Dargo !

CONNAL. Bring me thy father's shield ; the bossy, iron shield of Rinval ; that shield like the full-orbed moon, when she moves darkened through heaven !

CRIMORA. That shield I bring ; O Connal ! but it did not defend my father. By the spear of Gormar he fell. Thou may'st fall, O Connal !

CONNAL. Fall I may ! But raise my tomb, Crimora ! Grey stones, a mound of earth, shall send my name to other times. Bend thy red eye over my grave, beat thy mournful heaving breast. Though fair thou art, my love, as the light ; more pleasant than the gale of the hill ; yet I will not here remain. Raise my tomb, Crimora ?

CRIMORA. Then give me those arms that gleam ; that sword, and that spear of steel. I shall meet Dargo with Connal, and aid him in the fight. Farewel, ye rocks of Ardven ! ye deer ! and ye streams of the hill ! We shall return no more. Our tombs are distant far !

“ And did they return no more ? ” said Utha's bursting sigh. “ Fell the mighty in battle, and did Crimora live ? Her steps were lonely ; her soul was sad for Connal. Was he not young and lovely ; like the beam of the setting sun ? ” Ullin saw the virgin's tears, he took the softly-trembling harp : the song was lovely, but sad, and silence was in Carric-thura.

Autumn is dark on the mountains ; grey mist rests on the hills. The whirlwind is heard on

the heath. Dark rolls the river through the narrow plain. A tree stands alone on the hill, and marks the slumbering Connal. The leaves whirl round with the wind, and strew the grave of the dead. At times are seen here the ghosts of the departed, when the musing hunter alone stalks slowly over the heath.

Who can reach the source of thy race, O Connal ! who recount thy fathers ? Thy family grew like an oak on the mountain, which meeteth the wind with its lofty head. But now it is torn from the earth. Who shall supply the place of Connal ? Here was the din of arms ; here the groans of the dying. Bloody are the wars of Fingal, O Connal ! it was there thou didst fall. Thine arm was like a storm ; thy sword a beam of the sky ; thy height, a rock on the plain ; thine eyes a furnace of fire. Louder than a storm was thy voice, in the battles of thy steel. Warriors fell by thy sword, as the thistle by the staff of a boy. Dargo the mighty came on, darkening in his rage. His brows were gathered into wrath. His eyes like two caves in a rock. Bright rose their swords on each side ; loud was the clang of their steel.

The daughter of Rinval was near ; Crimora bright in the armour of man ; her yellow hair is loose behind, her bow is in her hand. She followed the youth to the war, Connal her much-beloved. She drew the string on Dargo ; but erring she pierced her Connal. He falls like an oak on the plain ; like a rock from the shaggy hill. What shall she do, hapless maid ! He bleeds ; her Connal dies ! All the night long she cries, and all the day, " O Connal, my love, and my friend ! " With grief the sad mourner dies ! Earth here incloses the loveliest pair on the hill.

The

The grass grows between the stones of the tomb;
I often sit in the mournful shade. The wind
sighs through the grass; their memory rushes on
my mind. Undisturbed you now sleep together;
in the tomb of the mountain you rest alone!

And soft be their rest, said Utha, hapless
children of streamy Lotha! I will remember
them with tears, and my secret song shall rise;
when the wind is in the groves of Tora, when
the stream is roaring near. Then shall they come
on my soul, with all their lovely grief!

Three days feasted the kings: On the fourth
their white sails arose. The winds of the north
drove Fingal to Morven's woody land. But the
spirit of Loda sat, in his cloud, behind the ships
of Frothal. He hung forward with all his blasts,
and spread the white-bosomed sails. The wounds
of his form were not forgot; he still feared * the
hand of the king!

16

* The story of Fingal and the spirit of Loda, supposed to be the famous Odin, is the most extravagant fiction in all Ossian's poems. It is not, however, without precedents in the best poets; and it must be said for Ossian, that he says nothing but what perfectly agreed with the notions of the times concerning ghosts. They thought the souls of the dead were material, and consequently susceptible of pain. Whether a proof could be drawn from this passage, that Ossian had no notion of a divinity, I shall leave to others to determine: It appears, however, that he was of opinion, that superior beings ought to take no notice of what passed among men.

THE

SONGS OF SELMA:

A R G U M E N T.

Address to the evening star. An apostrophe to Fingal and his times. Minona sings before the king the song of the unfortunate Colma : And the bards exhibit other specimens of their poetical talents ; according to an annual custom established by the monarchs of the ancient Caledonians.

T H E

SONGS OF SELMA.

STAR of descending night, fair is thy light in the west ! Thou liftest thy unshorn head from thy cloud : Thy steps are stately on thy hill. What dost thou behold in the plain ? The stormy winds are laid. The murmur of the torrent comes from afar. Roaring waves climb the distant rock. The flies of evening are on their feeble wings ; the hum of their course is on the field. What dost thou behold, fair light ? But thou dost smile and depart. The waves come with joy around thee : they bathe thy lovely hair. Farewel, thou silent beam ? Let the light of Ossian's soul arise !

And it does arise in its strength ! I behold my departed friends. Their gathering is on Lora, as in the days of other years. Fingal comes like a watery column of mist ; his heroes are around : And see the bards of song, grey-haired Ullin ! stately Ryno ! Alpin *, with the tuneful voice ! the soft complaint of Minona ! How are ye changed

* Alpin is from the same root with Albion, or rather Albin, the ancient name of Britain ; Alp, *high Island*, or *country*. The present name of our island has its origin in the Celtic tongue ; so that those who derive it from any other, betrayed their ignorance of the ancient language of our country. *Brait* or *Braid*, extensive ; and *in*, land.

changed, my friends, since the days of Selma's feast? When we contended, like gales of spring, as they fly along the hill, and bend by turns the feebly-whistling grafs. .

* Minona came forth in her beauty; with downcast look and tearful eye. Her hair flew slowly on the blast, that rushed unfrequent from the hill. The souls of the heroes were sad when she raised the tuneful voice. Often had they seen the grave of Salgar †, the dark dwelling of white-bosomed Colma ‡. Colma left alone on the hill, with all her voice of song! Salgar promised to come; but the night descended around. Hear the voice of Colma, when she sat alone on the hill!

COLMA.—It is night; I am alone, forlorn on the hill of storms. The wind is heard in the mountain. The torrent pours down the rock. No hut receives me from the rain; forlorn on the hill of winds!

Rise, moon! from behind thy clouds. Stars of the night, arise! Lead me, some light, to the place where my love rests from the chace alone! His bow near him, unstrung: His dogs panting around him. But here I must sit alone, by the rock of the mossy stream. The stream and the wind roar aloud. I hear not the voice of my love! Why delays my Salgar, why the chief of the hill, his promise? Here is the rock, and here the tree! Here is the roaring stream! Thou didst promise with night to be here. Ah! Whither is my Salgar gone? With thee I would fly,
from

* Ossian introduces Minona, not in the ideal scene in his own mind, which he had described; but at the annual feast of Selma, where the bards repeated their works before Fingal.

† Sealg-'er, *a hunter.*

‡ Cul-math, *a woman with fine hair.*

from my father ; with thee, from my brother of pride. Our race have long been foes ; we are not foes, O Salgar !

Cease a little while, O wind ! Stream, be thou silent a while ! Let my voice be heard around. Let my wanderer hear me ! Salgar ! It is Colma who calls. Here is the tree, and the rock. Salgar, my love ! I am here. Why delayest thou thy coming ? Lo ! the calm moon comes forth. The flood is bright in the vale. The rocks are grey on the steep. I see him not on the brow. His dogs come not before him, with tidings of his near approach. Here I must sit alone !

Who lie on the heath beside me ? Are they my love and my brother ? Speak to me, O my friends ! To Colma they give no reply. Speak to me : I am alone ! My soul is tormented with fears ! Ah ! they are dead ! Their swords are red from the fight. O my brother ! my brother ! Why hast thou slain my Salgar ? Why, O Salgar ! hast thou slain my brother ? Dear were ye both to me ! What shall I say in your praise ? Thou wert fair on the hill among thousands ! He was terrible in fight. Speak to me ; hear my voice ; hear me, sons of my love ! They are silent ; silent for ever ! Cold, cold are their breasts of clay ! Oh ! from the rock on the hill ; from the top of the windy steep, speak, ye ghosts of the dead ! speak, I will not be afraid ! Whither are you gone to rest ? In what cave of the hill shall I find the departed ? No feeble voice is on the gale : No answer half-drowned in the storm !

I sit in my grief ! I wait for morning in my tears ! Rear the tomb, ye friends of the dead. Close it not till Colma come. My life flies
away

away like a dream : Why should I stay behind ? Here shall I rest with my friends, by the stream of the sounding rock. When night comes on the hill ; when the loud winds arise ; my ghost shall stand in the blast, and mourn the death of my friends. The hunter shall hear from his booth. He shall fear, but love my voice ! For sweet shall my voice be for my friends : Pleasant were her friends to Colma !

Such was thy song, Minona, softly blushing daughter of Torman. Our tears descended for Colma, and our souls were sad ! Ullin came with his harp ; he gave the song of Alpin. The voice of Alpin was pleasant : The soul of Ryno was a beam of fire ! But they had rested in the narrow house : Their voice had ceased in Selma. Ullin had returned, one day, from the chace, before the heroes fell. He heard their strife on the hill ; their song was soft but sad ! They mourned the fall of Morar, first of mortal men ! His soul was like the soul of Fingal ; his sword like the sword of Oscar. But he fell, and his father mourned : His sister's eyes were full of tears. Minona's eyes were full of tears, the sister of car-borne Morar. She retired from the song of Ullin, like the moon in the west, when she foresees the shower, and hides her fair head in a cloud. I touched the harp, with Ullin ; the song of mourning rose !

RYNO. The wind and the rain are past : Calm is the noon of day. The clouds are divided in heaven. Over the green hills flies the inconstant sun. Red through the stony vale comes down the stream of the hill. Sweet are thy murmurs, O stream ! but more sweet is the voice I hear. It is the voice of Alpin, the son of song, mourning for the dead ! Bent is his
head

head of age ; red his tearful eye. Alpin, thou son of song, Why alone on the silent hill ? Why complainest thou, as a blast in the wood ; as a wave on the lonely shore ?

ALPIN. My tears, O Ryno ! are for the dead ; my voice for those that have passed away. 'Tall thou art on the hill ; fair among the sons of the vale. But thou shalt fall like Morar * ; the mourner shall sit on thy tomb. The hills shall know thee no more ; thy bow shall lie in the hall, unstrung !

Thou wert swift, O Morar ! as a roe on the desert ; terrible as a meteor of fire. Thy wrath was as the storm. Thy sword in battle, as lightning in the field. Thy voice was a stream after rain ; like thunder on distant hills. Many fell by thy arm ; they were consumed in the flames of thy wrath. But when thou didst return from war, how peaceful was thy brow ! Thy face was like the sun after rain ; like the moon in the silence of night ; calm as the breast of the lake when the loud wind is laid.

Narrow is thy dwelling now ! Dark the place of thine abode ! With three steps I compass thy grave, O thou who wast so great before ! Four stones, with their heads of moss, are the only memorial of thee. A tree with scarce a leaf, long grass, which whistles in the wind, mark to the hunter's eye the grave of the mighty Morar. Morar ! thou art low indeed. Thou hast no mother to mourn thee ; no maid with her tears of love. Dead is she that brought thee forth. Fallen is the daughter of Morglan.

Who on his staff is this ? Who is this, whose head is white with age ? Whose eyes are red with tears ?

* Mor ar, great man.

tears? Who quakes at every step? It is thy father*, O Morar! the father of no son but thee. He heard of thy fame in war; he heard of foes dispersed. He heard of Morar's renown; why did he not hear of his wound? Weep, thou father of Morar! weep; but thy son heareth thee not. Deep is the sleep of the dead; low their pillow of dust. No more shall he hear thy voice; no more awake at thy call. When shall it be morn in the grave, to bid the slumberer awake? Farewel, thou bravest of men! thou conqueror in the field! But the field shall see thee no more; nor the dark wood be lightened with the splendor of thy steel. Thou hast left no son. The song shall preserve thy name. Future times shall hear of thee; they shall hear of the fallen Morar!

The grief of all arose, but most the bursting sigh of Armin†. He remembers the death of his son, who fell in the days of his youth. Carmor‡ was near the hero, the chief of the echoing Galmal. Why bursts the sigh of Armin, he said? Is there a cause to mourn? The song comes, with its music, to melt and please the soul. It is like soft mist, that, rising from a lake, pours on the silent vale; the green flowers are filled with dew, but the sun returns in his strength, and the mist is gone. Why art thou sad, O Armin! chief of sea-surrounded Gorma?

Sad! I am! nor small is my cause of woe! Carmor, thou hast lost no son; thou hast lost no daughter of beauty. Colgar the valiant lives; and Annira fairest maid. The boughs of thy house

* Torman, the son of Carthul, lord of I-mora, one of the western isles.

† Armin, *a hero*. He was chief or petty king of Gorma, *i. e.* the blue island, supposed to be one of the Hebrides.

‡ Cear-mor, *a tall dark-complexioned man*.

house ascend, O Carmor ! but Armin is the last of his race. Dark is thy bed, O Daura ! deep thy sleep in the tomb ! When shalt thou awake with thy songs ? with all thy voice of music ?

Arise, winds of autumn, arise ; blow along the heath ! Streams of the mountains, roar ! Roar, tempests, in the groves of my oaks ! Walk through broken clouds, O moon ! show thy pale face, at intervals ! Bring to my mind the night, when all my children fell ; when Arindal the mighty fell ; when Daura the lovely failed !^{*} Daura, my daughter ! thou wert fair ; fair as the moon on Fura^{*} ; white as the driven snow ; sweet as the breathing gale. Arindal, thy bow was strong. Thy spear was swift in the field. Thy look was like mist on the wave : Thy shield, a red cloud in a storm. Armar, renowned in war, came, and fought Daura's love. He was not long refused ; fair was the hope of their friends !

Erath, son of Odgal repined : His brother had been slain by Armor. He came, disguised like a son of the sea : Fair was his skiff on the wave ; white his locks of age ; calm his serious brow. Fairest of women, he said, lovely daughter of Armin ! a rock not distant in the sea, bears a tree on its side ! red shines the fruit afar ! There Armar waits for Daura. I come to carry his love ! She went ; she called on Armar. Nought answered, but the son † of the rock, Armar, my love ! My love ! Why tormentest thou me with fear ? Hear son of Armar, hear : It is Daura who calleth thee ! Erath the traitor fled laughing to the land. She lifted

* Fuar-a, *cold island*.

† By the son of the rock the poet means the echoing back of the human voice from a rock. The vulgar were of opinion, that this repetition of sound was made by a spirit within the rock ; and they, on that account, called it *mac-talla* ; the son who dwells in the rock.

lifted up her voice ; she called for her brother and her father. Arindal ! Armin ! none to relieve your Daura !

Her voice came over the sea. Arindal my son descended from the hill ; rough in the spoils of the chase. His arrows rattled by his side ; his bow was in his hand : Five dark grey dogs attend his steps. He saw fierce Erath on the shore : He seized and bound him to an oak. Thick wind the thongs * of the hide around his limbs ; he loads the wind with his groans. Arindal ascends the deep in his boat, to bring Daura to land. Armar came in his wrath, and let fly the grey-feathered shaft. It sung ; it sunk in thy heart, O Arindal my son ! For Erath the traitor thou diedst. The oar is stopped at once ; he panted on the rock and expired. What is thy grief, O Daura, when round thy feet is poured thy brother's blood ! The boat is broken in twain. Armar plunges into the sea, to rescue his Daura, or die. Sudden a blast from the hill came over the waves. He sunk, and he rose no more.

Alone, on the sea-beat rock, my daughter was heard to complain. Frequent and loud were her cries. What could her father do ? All night I stood on the shore. I saw her by the faint beam of the moon. All night I heard her cries. Loud was the wind ; the rain beat hard on the hill. Before morning appeared, her voice was weak. It died away, like the evening-breeze among the grass of the rocks. Spent with grief she expired ; and left thee Armin alone. Gone is my strength in war ! fallen my pride among women ! When the storms aloft arise ; when the north lifts the
wave

* The poet here only means, that Erath was bound with leathern thongs.

wave on high ; I sit by the sounding shore, and look on the fatal rock. Often by the setting moon, I see the ghosts of my children. Half-viewless, they walk in mournful conference together. Will none of you speak in pity ? They do not regard their father. I am sad, O Carmor ! nor small is my cause of woe.

Such were the words of the bards in the days of song ; when the king heard the music of harps, the tales of other times ! The chiefs gathered from all their hills, and heard the lovely sound. They praised the voice * of Cona ! the first among a thousand bards ! But age is now on my tongue : My soul has failed ! I hear, at times, the ghosts of bards, and learn their pleasant song. But memory fails on my mind. I hear the call of years ! They say, as they pass along, why does Ossian sing ? Soon shall he lie in the narrow house, and no bard shall raise his fame ! Roll on, ye dark-brown years ; ye bring no joy on your course ! Let the tomb open to Ossian, for his strength has failed. The sons of song are gone to rest. My voice remains, like a blast, that roars, lonely, on a sea-surrounded rock, after the winds are laid. The dark mofs whistles there ; the distant mariner sees the waving trees !

* Ossian is sometimes poetically called *the voice of Cona*

CALTHON AND COLMAL:

Δ

P O E M.

VOL. I

K

ARGUMENT.

This piece, as many more of Ossian's compositions, is addressed to one of the first Christian missionaries. The story of the poem is handed down, by tradition, thus : In the country of the Britons, between the walls, two chiefs lived in the days of Fingal, Dunthalmo, lord of Teutha, supposed to be Tweed, and Rathmor, who dwelt at Clutha, well known to be the river Clyde. Rathmor was not more renowned for his generosity and hospitality, than Dunthalmo was infamous for his cruelty and ambition. Dunthalmo, through envy, or on account of some private feuds which subsisted between the families, murdered Rathmor at a feast; but, being afterwards touched with remorse, he educated the two sons of Rathmor, Calthon and Colmar, in his own house. They growing up to man's estate, dropped some hints that they intended to revenge the death of their father; upon which Dunthalmo shut them up in two caves on the banks of Teutha, intending to take them off privately. Colmal, the daughter of Dunthalmo, who was secretly in love with Calthon, helped him to make his escape from prison, and fled with him to Fingal, disguised in the habit of a young warrior, and implored his aid against Dunthalmo. Fingal sent Ossian with three hundred men to Colmar's relief. Dunthalmo having previously murdered Colmar, came to a battle with Ossian; but he was killed by that hero, and his army totally defeated.

Calthon married Colmal, his deliverer; and Ossian returned to Morven.

CALTHON AND COLMAL:

A

POEM.

P LEASANT is the voice of thy song, thou lonely dweller of the rock ! It comes on the sound of the stream, along the narrow vale. My soul awakes, O stranger ! in the midst of my hall. I stretch my hand to the spear, as in the days of other years. I stretch my hand, but it is feeble ; and the sigh of my bosom grows. Wilt thou not listen, son of the rock ! to the song of Ossian ? My soul is full of other times ; the joy of my youth returns. Thus the sun appears in the west, after the steps of his brightness have moved behind a storm ; the green hills lift their dewy heads : The blue streams rejoice in the vale. The aged hero comes forth on his staff ; his grey hair glitters in the beam. Dost thou not behold, son of the rock ! a shield in Ossian's hall ? It is marked with the strokes of battle ; and the brightness of its bosses has failed. That shield the great Dunthalgo bore, the chief of streamy Teutha. Dunthalgo bore it in battle, before he fell by Ossian's spear. Listen, son of the rock ! to the tale of other years !

Rathmor was a chief of Clutha. The feeble dwelt in his hall. The gates of Rathmor were never shut ; his feast was always spread. The sons of the stranger came. They blessed the

generous chief of Clutha. Bards raised the song, and touched the harp : Joy brightened on the face of the sad ! Dunthalmo came, in his pride, and rushed into the combat of Rathmor. The chief of Clutha overcame : The rage of Dunthalmo rose. He came, by night, with his warriors ; the mighty Rathmor fell. He fell in his halls, where his feast was often spread for strangers.

Colmar and Calthon were young, the sons of car-borne Rathmor. They came, in the joy of youth, into their father's hall. They behold him in his blood ; their bursting tears descend. The soul of Dunthalmo melted, when he saw the children of youth. He brought them to Alteutha's * walls ; they grew in the house of their foe. They bent the bow in his presence ; and came forth to his wars. They saw the fallen walls of their fathers ; they saw the green thorn in the hall. Their tears rushed forth in secret. At times, their faces were sad. Dunthalmo beheld their grief : His darkening soul designed their death. He closed them in two caves, on the echoing banks of Teutha. The sun did not come there with his beams ; nor the moon of heaven by night. The sons of Rathmor remained in darkness, and foresaw their death.

The daughter of Dunthalmo wept in silence, the fair-haired, blue-eyed Colmal †. Her eye
had

* Al-teutha, or rather Balteutha, *the town of Tweed*, the name of Dunthalmo's seat. It is observable, that all the names in this poem are derived from the Gaelic language ; which is a proof that it was once the universal language of the whole island.

† Caol-mhal, *a woman with small eye-brows* ; small eye-brows were a distinguishing part of beauty in Ossian's time ; and he seldom fails to give them to the fine women of his poems.

had rolled in secret on Calthou; his loveliness swelled in her soul. She trembled for her warrior; but what could Colmal do? Her arm could not lift the spear; nor was the sword formed for her side. Her white breast never rose beneath a mail. Neither was her eye the terror of heroes. What canst thou do, O Colmal! for the falling chief? Her steps are unequal; her hair is loose: Her eye looks wildly through her tears. She came, by night, to the hall*. She armed her lovely form in steel; the steel of a young warrior, who fell in the midst of his battles. She came to the cave of Calthou, and loosed the thong from his hands.

“ Arise, son of Rathmor,” she said, “ arise, the night is dark! Let us fly to the king of Selma†, chief of fallen Clutha! I am the son of Lamgal, who dwelt in thy father’s hall. I heard of thy dark dwelling in the cave, and my soul arose. Arise, son of Rathmor, arise, the night is dark!” “ Blest voice!” replied the chief, “ comest thou from the clouds to Calthou? The ghosts of his fathers have often descended in his dreams, since the sun has retired from his eyes, and darkness has dwelt around him. Or art thou the son of Lamgal, the chief I often saw in Clutha? But shall I fly to Fingal, and Colmar my brother low? Will I fly to Morven, and the hero closed in night? No: give me that spear, son of Lamgal, Calthou will defend his brother!”

K 3

“ A

* That is, the hall where the arms taken from enemies were hung up as trophies. Ossian is very careful to make his stories probable; for he makes Colmal put on the arms of a youth killed in his first battle, as more proper for a young woman, who cannot be supposed strong enough to carry the armour of a full grown warrior.

† Fingal.

“ A thousand warriors,” replied the maid, “ stretch their spears round car-borne Colmar. What can Calthon do against a host so great? Let us fly to the king of Morven, he will come with war. His arm is stretched forth to the unhappy; the lightning of his sword is round the weak. Arise, thou son of Rathmor! the shadows will fly away. Arise, or thy steps may be seen, and thou must fall in youth!”

The fighting hero rose; his tears descend for car-borne Colmar. He came with the maid to Selma’s hall; but he knew not that it was Colmar. The helmet cover’d her lovely face. Her bosom heaved beneath the steel. Fingal returned from the chase, and found the lovely strangers. They were like two beams of light, in the midst of the hall of shells. The king heard the tale of grief; and turned his eyes around. A thousand heroes half-rose before him; claiming the war of Teutha. I came with my spear from the hill; the joy of battle rose in my breast: For the king spoke to Ossian in the midst of a thousand chiefs.

“ Son of my strength,” began the king, “ take thou the spear of Fingal. Go to Teutha’s rushing stream, and save the car-borne Colmar. Let thy fame return before thee like a pleasant gale; that my soul may rejoice over my son, who renews the renown of our fathers. Ossian! be thou a storm in war; but mild when the foe is low! It was thus my fame arose, O my son! Be thou like Selma’s chief. When the haughty come to my halls, my eyes behold them not. But my arm is stretched forth to the unhappy. My sword defends the weak.”

I rejoiced in the words of the king. I took my rattling arms. Diaran* rose at my side, and Dargo† king of spears. Three hundred youths followed our steps: The lovely strangers were at my side. Dunthalmo heard the sound of our approach. He gathered the strength of Teutha. He stood on a hill with his host. They were like rocks broken with thunder, when their bent trees are singed and bare, and the streams of their

K. 4

chinks

* Diaran, father of that Connal who was unfortunately killed by Crimora, his mistress.

† Dargo, the son of Collath, is celebrated in other poems by Ossian. He is said to have been killed by a boar at a hunting party. The lamentation of his mistress, or wife; Mingala, over his body, is extant; but whether it is of Ossian's composition, I cannot determine. It is generally ascribed to him, and has much of his manner; but some traditions mention it as an imitation by some later bard. As it has some poetical merit, I have subjoined it.

THE spouse of Dargo comes in tears: For Dargo was no more! The heroes sigh over Lartho's chief: And what shall sad Mingala do? The dark soul vanished like morning mist, before the king of spears: But the generous glowed in his presence like the morning star.

Who was the fairest and most lovely? Who but Collath's stately son? Who sat in the midst of the wise, but Dargo of the mighty deeds?

Thy hand touched the trembling harp: Thy voice was soft as summer-winds. Ah me! what shall the heroes say? for Dargo fell before a boar. Pale is the lovely cheek; the look of which was firm in danger! Why hast thou failed on our hills? thou fairer than the beams of the sun!

The daughter of Adension was lovely in the eyes of the valiant; she was lovely in their eyes, but she chose to be the spouse of Dargo.

But thou art alone, Mingala! The night is coming with its clouds; Where is the bed of thy repose? Where but in the tomb of Dargo?

Why dost thou lift the stone, O bard? Why dost thou shut the narrow house? Mingala's eyes are heavy, bard! She must sleep with Dargo.

Last night I heard the song of joy in Lartho's lefty hall. But silence dwells around my bed. Mingala rests with Dargo.

chinks have failed. The stream of Teutha rolled; in its pride, before the gloomy foe. I sent a bard to Dunthalmo, to offer the combat on the plain; but he smiled in the darkness of his pride. His unfettered host moved on the hill; like the mountain cloud, when the blast has entered its womb, and scatters the curling gloom on every side.

They brought Colmar to Teutha's bank, bound with a thousand thongs. The chief is sad, but stately. His eye is on his friends; for we stood in our arms, whilst Teutha's waters rolled between. Dunthalmo came with his spear, and pierced the hero's side: He rolled on the bank in his blood. We heard his broken sighs. Calthon rushed into the stream: I bounded forward on my spear. Teutha's race fell before us. Night came rolling down. Dunthalmo rested on a rock amidst an aged wood. The rage of his bosom burned against the car-borne Calthon. But Calthon stood in his grief; he mourned the fallen Colmar; Colmar slain in youth, before his fame arose!

I bade the song of woe to rise, to sooth the mournful chief; but he stood beneath a tree, and often threw his spear on earth. The humid eye of Colmal rolled near in a secret tear: She foresaw the fall of Dunthalmo, or of Clutha's warlike chief. Now half the night had passed away. Silence and darkness were on the field. Sleep rested on the eyes of the heroes: Calthon's settling soul was still. His eyes were half-closed; but the murmur of Teutha had not yet failed in his ear. Pale, and shewing his wounds, the ghost of Colmar came: He bent his head over the hero, and raised his feeble voice!

“Sleeps the son of Rathmor in his night, and his brother low? Did we not rise to the chace together?”

gether? Pursued we not the dark-brown hinds? Colmar was not forgot till he fell; till death had blasted his youth. I lie pale beneath the rock of Lona. O let Calthion rise! The morning comes with its beams; Dunthalmo will dishonour the fallen." He passed away in his blast. The rising Calthion saw the steps of his departure. He rushed in the sound of his steel. Unhappy Colmal rose. She followed her hero through night, and dragged her spear behind. But, when Calthion came to Lona's rock, he found his fallen brother. The rage of his bosom rose; he rushed among the foe. The groans of death ascend. They close around the chief. He is bound in the midst, and brought to gloomy Dunthalmo. The shout of joy arose; and the hills of night replied.

I started at the sound; and took my father's spear. Diaran rose at my side; and the youthful strength of Dargo. We missed the chief of Clutha, and our souls were sad. I dreaded the departure of my fame. The pride of my valour rose! "Sons of Morven!" I said, "it is not thus our fathers fought. They rested not on the field of strangers, when the foe was not fallen before them. Their strength was like the eagles of heaven; their renown is in the song. But our people fall by degrees. Our fame begins to depart. What shall the king of Morven say, if Ossian conquers not at Teutha? Rise in your steel, ye warriors! follow the sound of Ossian's course. He will not return, but renowned, to the echoing walls of Selma."

Morning rose on the blue waters of Teutha. Colmal stood before me in tears. She told of the chief of Clutha: Thrice the spear fell from her hand. My wrath turned against the stranger; for my soul trembled for Calthion. "Son of the

feeble hand!" I said, "do Teutha's warriors fight with tears? The battle is not won with grief; nor dwells the sigh in the soul of war. Go to the deer of Carmun, to the lowing herds of Teutha. But leave these arms, thou son of fear! A warrior may lift them in fight."

I tore the mail from her shoulders. Her snowy breast appeared. She bent her blushing face to the ground. I looked in silence to the chiefs. The spear fell from my hand; the sigh of my bosom rose! But when I heard the name of the maid, my crowding tears rushed down. I blessed the lovely beam of youth, and bade the battle move!

Why, son of the rock, should Ossian tell how Teutha's warriors died? They are now forgot in their land; their tombs are not found on the heath. Years came on with their storms. The green mounds are mouldered away. Scarce is the grave of Dunthalmo seen, or the place where he fell by the spear of Ossian. Some grey warrior, half blind with age, sitting by night at the flaming oak of the hall, tells now my deeds to his sons, and the fall of the dark Dunthalmo. The faces of youth bend sidelong towards his voice. Surprise and joy burn in their eyes! I found Calthon bound to an oak; my sword cut the thongs from his hands. I gave him the white-bosomed Colmal. They dwelt in the halls of Teutha.

LATHMON:

A

POEM.

K 6

ARGUMENT.

Lathmon, a British prince, taking advantage of Fingal's absence on an expedition in Ireland, made a descent on Morven, and advanced within sight of Selma, the royal residence. Fingal arrived in the mean time, and Lathmon retreated to a hill, where his army was surpris'd by night, and himself taken prisoner by Ossian and Gaul the son of Morni. The poem opens with the first appearance of Fingal on the coast of Morven, and ends, it may be supposed, about noon the next day.

LATHMON:

A

P O E M.

SELMA, thy halls are silent. There is no sound in the woods of Morven. The wave tumbles alone on the coast. The silent beam of the sun is on the field. The daughters of Morven come forth, like the bow of the shower; they look towards green Erin for the white sails of the king. He had promised to return, but the winds of the north arose!

Who pours from the eastern hill, like a stream of darkness? It is the host of Lathmon. He has heard of the absence of Fingal. He trusts in the wind of the north. His soul brightens with joy. Why dost thou come, O Lathmon? The mighty are not in Selma. Why comest thou with thy forward spear? Will the daughters of Morven fight? But stop, O mighty stream, in thy course! Does not Lathmon behold these sails? Why dost thou vanish, Lathmon, like the mist of the lake? But the squally storm is behind thee; Fingal pursues thy steps!

The king of Morven had started from sleep, as we rolled on the dark-blue wave. He stretched his hand to the spear, his heroes rose around. We knew that he had seen his fathers, for they often descended to his dreams, when the sword of the foe rose over the land; and the battle darkened before us. "Whither hast thou fled, O wind?" said the king of Morven. "Dost thou

thou rustle in the chambers of the south, pursuest thou the shower in other lands? Why dost thou not come to my sails? to the blue face of my seas? The foe is in the land of Morven, and the king is absent far. But let each bind on his mail, and each assume his shield. Stretch every spear over the wave; let every sword be unsheathed. Lathmon * is before us with his host: He that fled † from Fingal on the plains of Lona. But he returns, like a collected stream; and his roar is between our hills."

Such were the words of Fingal. We rushed into Carmona's bay. Ossian ascended the hill: He thrice struck his bossy shield. The rock of Morven replied; the bounding roes came forth. The foe was troubled in my presence: He collected his darkened host. I stood, like a cloud on the hill, rejoicing in the arms of my youth.

Morni ‡ sat beneath a tree, at the roaring waters of Strumon ||: His locks of age are grey: He leans forward on his staff; young Gaul is near the hero, hearing the battles of his father. Often did he rise, in the fire of his soul, at the mighty deeds of Morni. The aged heard the sound of Ossian's shield: He knew the sign of war. He started at once from his place. His grey hair parted

* It is said by tradition, that it was the intelligence of Lathmon's invasion that occasioned Fingal's return from Ireland; though Ossian, more poetically, ascribes the cause of Fingal's knowledge to his dream.

† He alludes to a battle wherein Fingal had defeated Lathmon.

‡ Morni was chief of a numerous tribe, in the days of Fingal, and his father Comhal. The last mentioned hero was killed in battle against Morni's tribe; but the valour and conduct of Fingal reduced them, at last, to obedience. We find the two heroes perfectly reconciled in this poem.

|| Stru'mone, *stream of the bill*. Here the proper name of a rivulet in the neighbourhood of Selma.

parted on his back. He remembered the deeds of other years.

“ My son,” he said, to fair-haired Gaul, “ I hear the sound of war. The king of Morven is returned, his signals are spread on the wind. Go to the halls of Strumon; bring his arms to Morni. Bring the shield of my father’s latter years, for my arm begins to fail. Take thou thy armour, O Gaul! and rush to the first of thy battles. Let thine arm reach to the renown of thy fathers. Be thy course in the field, like the eagle’s wing. Why shouldst thou fear death, my son? the valiant fall with fame; their shields turn the dark stream of danger away; renown dwells on their aged hairs. Dost thou not see, O Gaul! how the steps of my age are honoured? Morni moves forth, and the young meet him, with awe, and turn their eyes, with silent joy, on his course. But I never fled from danger, my son! my sword lightened through the darkness of war. The stranger melted before me; the mighty were blasted in my presence.”

Gaul brought the arms to Morni: the aged warrior is covered with steel. He took the spear in his hand, which was stained with the blood of the valiant. He came towards Fingal, his son attended his steps. The son of Comhal arose before him with joy, when he came in his locks of age.

“ Chief of roaring Strumon!” said the rising soul of Fingal; “ do I behold thee in arms, after thy strength has failed? Often has Morni shone in fight, like the beam of the ascending sun; when he disperses the storms of the hill, and brings peace to the glittering fields. But why didst thou not rest in thine age? Thy renown is in the song. The people behold thee, and bliss
the

the departure of mighty Morni. Why didst thou not rest in thine age? The foe will vanish before Fingal!"

"Son of Comhal," replied the chief, "the strength of Morni's arm has failed. I attempt to draw the sword of my youth, but it remains in its place. I throw the spear, but it falls short of the mark. I feel the weight of my shield. We decay like the grass of the hill: Our strength returns no more. I have a son. O Fingal! his soul has delighted in Morni's deeds; but his sword has not been lifted against a foe, neither has his fame begun. I come with him to war; to direct his arm in fight. His renown will be a light to my soul, in the dark hour of my departure. O that the name of Morni were forgot among the people! that the heroes would only say, "Behold the father of Gaul!"

"King of Strumon," Fingal replied, "Gaul shall lift the sword in fight. But he shall lift it before Fingal; my arm shall defend his youth. But rest thou in the halls of Selma; and hear of our renown. Bid the harp to be strung, and the voice of the bard to arise, that those who fall may rejoice in their fame; and the soul of Morni brighten with joy. Ossian! thou hast fought in battles: the blood of strangers is on thy spear: thy course be with Gaul, in the strife; but depart not from the side of Fingal! lest the foe should find you alone, and your fame fail in my presence."

"I saw * Gaul in his arms; my soul was mixed with his. The fire of the battle was in his eyes! he looked to the foe with joy. We spoke the
words

* Ossian speaks. The contrast between the old and young heroes is strongly marked. The circumstance of the latter drawing their swords is well imagined, and agrees with the impatience of young soldiers just entered upon action.

words of friendship in secret; the lightning of our swords poured together; for we drew them behind the wood, and tried the strength of our arms on the empty air."

Night came down on Morven. Fingal sat at the beam of the oak. Morni sat by his side with all his grey waving locks. Their words were of other times, of the mighty deeds of their fathers. Three bards, at times, touched the harp: Ullin was near with his song. He sung of the mighty Comhal; but darkness * gathered on Morni's brow. He rolled his red eye on Ullin: at once ceased the song of the bard. Fingal observed the aged hero, and he mildly spoke. "Chief of Strumon, why that darkness? Let the days of other years be forgot. Our fathers contended in war; but we meet together, at the feast. Our swords are turned on the foe of our land: he melts before us on the field. Let the days of our fathers be forgot, hero of mossy Strumon!"

"King of Morven," replied the chief, "I remember thy father with joy. He was terrible in battle; the rage of the chief was deadly. My eyes were full of tears, when the king of heroes fell. The valiant fall, O Fingal! the feeble remain on the hills! How many heroes have passed away, in the days of Morni! Yet I did not shun the battle; neither did I fly from the strife of the valiant. Now let the friends of
Fingal

* Ullin had chosen ill the subject of his song. The *darkness which gathered on Morni's brow* did not proceed from any dislike he had to Comhal's name, though they were foes, but from his fear that the song would awaken Fingal to a remembrance of the feuds which had subsisted of old between the families. Fingal's speech on this occasion abounds with generosity and good sense.

Fingal rest; for the night is around; that they may rise, with strength, to battle against car-borne Lathmon. I hear the sound of his host, like thunder moving on the hills. Ossian! and fair-haired Gaul! ye are young and swift in the race. Observe the foes of Fingal from that woody hill. But approach them not, your fathers are not near to shield you. Let not your fame fall at once. The valour of youth may fail!"

We heard the words of the chief with joy. We moved in the clang of our arms. Our steps are on the woody hill. Heaven burns with all its stars. The meteors of death fly over the field. The distant noise of the foe reached our ears. It was then Gaul spoke, in his valour: His hand half-unsheathed the sword.

"Son of Fingal!" he said, "why burns the soul of Gaul? My heart beats high. My steps are disordered; my hand trembles on my sword. When I look towards the foe, my soul lightens before me. I see their sleeping host. Tremble thus the souls of the valiant in battles of the spear? How would the soul of Morni rise if we should rush on the foe! Our renown would grow in song: Our steps would be stately in the eyes of the brave."

"Son of Morni," I replied, "my soul delights in war. I delight to shine in battle alone, to give my name to the bards. But what if the foe should prevail; can I behold the eyes of the king? They are terrible in his displeasure, and like the flames of death. But I will not behold them in his wrath! Ossian shall prevail or fall! But shall the fame of the vanquished rise? They pass like a shade away. But the fame of Ossian shall rise? His deeds shall be like his father's.
Let

Let us rush in our arms ; son of Morni, let us rush to fight. Gaul ! if thou shouldst return, go to Selma's lofty hall. Tell to Evirallin that I fell with fame ; carry this sword to Branno's daughter. Let her give it to Oscar, when the years of his youth shall arise."

" Son of Fingal," Gaul replied with a sigh ; " shall I return after Ossian is low ? What would my father say, what Fingal the king of men ? The feeble would turn their eyes and say, " Behold Gaul who left his friend in his blood ! " Ye shall not behold me, ye feeble, but in the midst of my renown ! Ossian ! I have heard from my father the mighty deeds of heroes ; their mighty deeds when alone ; for the soul increases in danger."

" Son of Morni," I replied and strode before him on the heath, " our fathers shall praise our valour, when they mourn our fall. A beam of gladness shall rise on their souls, when their eyes are full of tears. They will say, " Our sons have not fallen unknown : they spread death around them." But why should we think of the narrow house ? The sword defends the brave. But death pursues the flight of the feeble ; their renown is never heard."

We rushed forward through night ; we came to the roar of a stream, which bent its blue course round the foe, through trees that echoed to its sound. We came to the bank of the stream, and saw the sleeping host. Their fires were decayed on the plain ; the lonely steps of their scouts were distant far. I stretched my spear before me to support my steps over the stream. But Gaul took my hand, and spoke the words of the brave. " Shall the son of Fingal rush on the sleeping foe ? Shall he come like a blast

blast by night, when it overturns the young trees in secret? Fingal did not thus receive his fame, nor dwells renown on the grey hairs of Morni, for actions like these. Strike, Ossian, strike the shield, and let their thousands rise! Let them meet Gaul in his first battle, that he may try the strength of his arm."

My soul rejoiced over the warrior: my bursting tears came down. "And the foe shall meet thee, Gaul!" I said: "the fame of Morni's son shall arise. But rush not too far, my hero: Let the gleam of thy steel be near to Ossian. Let our hands join in slaughter. Gaul! dost thou not behold that rock? Its grey side dimly gleams to the stars. Should the foe prevail, let our back be towards the rock. Then shall they fear to approach our spears; for death is in our hands!"

I struck thrice my echoing shield. The starting foe arose. We rushed on in the sound of our arms. Their crowded steps fly over the heath. They thought that the mighty Fingal was come. The strength of their arms withered away. The sound of their flight was like that of flame, when it rushes thro' the blasted groves. It was then the spear of Gaul flew in its strength; it was then his sword arose. Cremor fell; and mighty Leth. Dunthormo struggled in his blood. The steel rushed through Crotho's side, as bent, he rose on his spear; the black stream poured from the wound, and hissed on the half-extinguished oak. Cathmin saw the steps of the hero behind him, he ascended a blasted tree; but the spear pierced him from behind. Shrieking, panting, he fell. Moss and withered branches pursue his fall, and strew the blue arms of Gaul.

Such were thy deeds, son of Morni, in the first of thy battles. Nor slept the sword by thy side,

side, thou last of Fingal's race ! Ossian rushed forward in his strength ; the people fell before him : as the grass by the staff of the boy, when he whistles along the field, and the grey beard of the thistle falls. But careless the youth moves on ; his steps are towards the desert. Grey morning rose around us ; the winding streams are bright along the heath. 'The foe gathered on a hill ; and the rage of Lathmon rose. He bent the red eye of his wrath : he is silent in his rising grief. He often struck his bossy shield ; and his steps are unequal on the heath. I saw the distant darkness of the hero, and I spoke to Morni's son.

“ Car-borne chief of Strumon, dost thou behold the foe ? They gather on the hill in their wrath. Let their steps be towards the king *. He shall rise in his strength, and the host of Lathmon vanish. Our fame is around us, warrior, the eyes of the aged † will rejoice. But let us fly, son of Morni, Lathmon descends the hill.” “ Then let our steps be slow,” replied the fair-haired Gaul ; “ lest the foe say, with a smile, “ Behold the warriors of night. They are, like ghosts, terrible in darkness ; they melt away before the beam of the east.” Ossian, take the shield of Gormar, who fell beneath thy spear. The aged heroes will rejoice beholding the deeds of their sons.”

Such were our words on the plan, when Sulmath ‡ came to car-borne Lathmon : Sulmath chief of Dutha at the dark-rolling stream of Duvranna.

* Fingal.

† Fingal and Morni.

‡ Suil-mhath, a man of good eyesight.

Duvranna*. Why dost thou not rush, son of Nuäth, with a thousand of thy heroes? Why dost thou not descend with thy host, before the warriors fly. Their blue arms are beaming to the rising light, and their steps are before us on the heath!"

"Son of the feeble hand," said Lathmon, "shall my host descend! They are but two, son of Dutha! shall a thousand lift their steel! Nuäth would mourn, in his hall, for the departure of his fame. His eyes would turn from Lathmon, when the tread of his feet, approached. Go thou to the heroes, chief of Dutha! I behold the stately steps of Ossian. His fame is worthy of my steel! let us contend in fight."

The noble Sulmath came.. I rejoiced in the words of the king. I raised the shield on my arm; Gaul placed in my hand the sword of Morni. We returned to the murmuring stream; Lathmon came down in his strength. His dark host rolled, like clouds, behind him: but the son of Nuäth was bright in his steel!

"Son of Fingal," said the hero, "thy fame has grown on our fall. How many lie there of my people by thy hand, thou king of men! Lift now thy spear against Lathmon; lay the son of Nuäth low! Lay him low among his warriors, or thou thyself must fall! It shall never be told in my halls that my people fell in my presence; that they fell in the presence of Lathmon when his sword rested by his side: the blue eyes of
Cutha

* Dabh-bhranna, *dark-mountain stream*. A river in Scotland, which falls into the sea at Banff, still retains the name of Duvran. If that is meant in this passage Lathmon must have been a prince of the Pictish nation, or those Caledonians who inhabited of old the eastern coast of Scotland.

Cutha would roll in tears; her steps be lonely in the vales of Dunlathmon!"

"Neither shall it be told," I replied, "that the son of Fingal fled. Were his steps covered with darkness, yet would not Ossian fly! His soul would meet him, and say, "Does the bard of Selma fear the foe?" No: he does not fear the foe. His joy is in the midst of battle!"

Lathmon came on with his spear. He pierced the shield of Ossian. I felt the cold steel by my side. I drew the sword of Morni. I cut the spear in twain. The bright point fell glittering on earth. The son of Nuäth burnt in his wrath. He lifted high his sounding shield. His dark eyes rolled above it, as bending forward, it shone like a gate of brass! But Ossian's spear pierced the brightness of its boss, and sunk in a tree that rose behind. The shield hung on the quivering lance! but Lathmon still advanced! Gaul foresaw the fall of the chief. He stretched his buckler before my sword; when it descended, in a stream of light, over the king of Dunlathmon!

Lathmon beheld the son of Morni. The tear started from his eye. He threw the sword of his fathers on earth, and spoke the words of the brave. "Wy should Lathmon fight against the first of men? Your souls are beams from heaven; your swords the flames of death! Who can equal the renown of the heroes, whose deeds are so great in youth? O that ye were in the halls of Nuäth, in the green dwelling of Lathmon! Then would my father say, that his son did not yield to the weak: But who comes a mighty stream, along the echoing heath? The little hills are troubled before him; a thousand ghosts are on

on the beams of his steel; the ghosts of those who are to fall *, by the arm of the king of re-founding Morven. Happy art thou, O Fingal! thy sons shall fight thy wars. They go forth before thee; they return with the steps of their renown!"

Fingal came, in his mildness, rejoicing in secret over the deeds of his son. Morni's face brightened with gladness; his aged eyes look faintly through tears of joy. We came to the halls of Selma. We sat around the feast of shells. The maids of song came into our presence, and the mildly blushing Evirallin! Her hair spreads on her neck of snow, her eye rolls in secret on Ossian. She touched the harp of music; we blessed the daughter of Branno!

Fingal rose in his place, and spoke to Lathmon king of spears. The sword of Trenmor shook by his side, as high he raised his mighty arm. "Son of Nuäth," he said, "why dost thou search for fame in Morven? We are not of the race of the feeble; our swords gleam not over the weak. When did we rouse thee, O Lathmon! with the sound of war? Fingal does not delight in battle, though his arm is strong! My renown grows on the fall of the haughty. The light of my steel pours on the proud in arms. The battle comes! and the tombs of the valiant rise; the tombs of my people rise, O my fathers! I at last must remain alone! But I will remain renowned; the departure of my soul shall be a stream of light. Lathmon! retire to thy place! Turn thy battles to other lands! The race of Morven are renowned; their foes are the sons of the unhappy!"

* It was thought, in Ossian's time, that each person had his attending spirit. The traditions concerning this opinion are dark and unsatisfactory.

OITHONA:

A

P O E M.

VOL I

L

ARGUMENT.

Gaul, the son of Morni, attended Lathmon into his own country, after his being defeated in Morven, as related in the preceding poem. He was kindly entertained by Nuath, the father of Lathmon, and fell in love with his daughter Oithona. The lady was no less enamoured of Gaul, and a day was fixed for their marriage. In the mean time Fingal, preparing for an expedition into the country of the Britons, sent for Gaul. He obeyed, and went; but not without promising to Oithona to return, if he survived the war, by a certain day. Lathmon too was obliged to attend his father Nuath in his wars, and Oithona was left alone at Dunlathmon, the seat of the family. Dunrommath, lord of Uthal, supposed to be one of the Orkneys, taking advantage of the absence of her friends, came and carried off, by force, Oithona, who had formerly rejected his love, into Tromathon, a desert island, where he concealed her in a cave.

Gaul returned on the day appointed; heard of the rape, and sailed to Tromathon, to revenge himself on Dunrommath. When he landed, he found Oithona disconsolate, and resolved not to survive the loss of her honour. She told him the story of her misfortunes, and she scarce ended, when Dunrommath, with his followers, appeared at the further end of the island. Gaul prepared to attack him, recommending to Oithona to retire till the battle was over. She seemingly obeyed; but she secretly armed herself, rushing into the thickest of the battle, and was mortally wounded. Gaul, pursuing the flying enemy, found her just expiring on the field: He mourned over her, raised her tomb, and returned to Morven. Thus is the story handed down by tradition; nor is it given with any material difference in the poem, which opens with Gaul's return to Dunlathmon, after the rape of Oithona.

OITHONA:

A

POEM.

DARKNESS dwells around Dunlathmon, though the moon shews half her face on the hill. The daughter of night turns her eyes away; she beholds the approaching grief. The son of Morni is on the plain: There is no sound in the hall. No long-streaming beam of light comes trembling through the gloom. The voice of Oithona* is not heard amidst the noise of the streams of Duvranna. "Whither art thou gone in thy beauty, dark-haired daughter of Nuäth? Lathmon is in the field of the valiant, but thou didst promise to remain in the hall; thou didst promise to remain in the hall till the son of Morni returned. Till he returned from Strumon, to the maid of his love! The tear was on thy cheek at his departure; the sigh rose in secret in thy breast. But thou dost not come forth with songs, with the lightly-trembling sound of the harp!"

Such were the words of Gaul, when he came to Dunlathmon's towers. The gates were open and dark. The winds were blustering in the hall. The trees strowed the threshold with leaves; the murmur of night was abroad. Sad and

L 2

silent,

* Oithona, the virgin of the wave.

silent, at a rock, the son of Morni sat : His soul trembling for the maid ; but he knew not whither to turn his course ! The son * of Leth stood at a distance, and heard the winds in his bushy hair. But he did not raise his voice, for he saw the sorrow of Gaul !

Sleep descended on the chiefs. The visions of night arose. Oithona stood, in a dream, before the eyes of Morni's son. Her hair was loose and disordered : Her lovely eye rolled deep in tears. Blood stained her snowy arm. The robe half hid the wound of her breast. She stood over the chief, and her voice was feebly heard. " Sleeps the son of Morni, he that was lovely in the eyes of Oithona ? Sleeps Gaul at the distant rock, and the daughter of Nuäth low ? The sea rolls round the dark isle of Tromathon. I sit in my tears in the cave ! Nor do I sit alone, O Gaul ! the dark chief of Cuthal is there. He is there in the rage of his love. What can Oithona do ? "

A rougher blast rushed through the oak. The dream of night departed. Gaul took his aspen spear. He stood in the rage of his soul. Often did his eyes turn to the east. He accused the lagging light. At length the morning came forth. The hero lifted up the sail. The winds came rustling from the hill ; he bounded on the waves of the deep. On the third day arose Tromathon †, like a blue shield in the midst of the sea. The white wave roared against its rocks ; sad Oithona sat on the coast ! She looked on the rolling waters, and her tears came down. But
when

* Morlo, the son of Leth, is one of Fingal's most famous heroes. He and three other men attended Gaul on his expedition to Tromathon.

† Trom-thon, *heavy or deep-sounding wave.*

when she saw Gaul in his arms, she started, and turned her eyes away. Her lovely cheek is bent and red; her white arm trembles by her side. Thrice she strove to fly from his presence; thrice her steps failed her as she went?

“ Daughter of Nuäth,” said the hero, “ why dost thou fly from Gaul? Do my eyes send forth the flame of death? Darkens hatred in my soul? Thou art to me the beam of the east, rising in a land unknown. But thou coverest thy face with sadness, daughter of car-borne Nuäth! Is the foe of Oithona near? My soul burns to meet him in fight. The sword trembles by the side of Gaul, and longs to glitter in his hand. Speak, daughter of Nuäth! dost thou not behold my tears?”

“ Young chief of Strumon,” replied the maid, “ why comest thou over the dark-blue wave, to Nuäth’s mournful daughter? Why did I not pass away in secret, like the flower of the rock, that lifts its fair head unseen, and strows its withered leaves on the blast? Why didst thou come, O Gaul! to hear my departing sigh? I vanish in my youth; my name shall not be heard. Or it will be heard with grief; the tears of Nuäth must fall. Thou wilt be sad, son of Morni! for the departed fame of Oithona. But she shall sleep in the narrow tomb, far from the voice of the mourner. Why didst thou come, chief of Strumon! to the sea-beat rocks of Tromathon?”

“ I came to meet thy foes, daughter of car-borne Nuäth! The death of Cuthal’s chief darkens before me; or Morni’s son shall fall! Oithona! when Gaul is low, raise my tomb on that oozy rock. When the dark-bounding ship shall pass, call the sons of the sea! Call

them, and give this sword, to bear it hence to Morni's hall. The grey-haired chief will then cease to look towards the desert for the return of his son !”

“ Shall the daughter of Nuäth live ?” she replied with a bursting sigh. “ Shall I live in Tromathon, and the son of Morni low ? My heart is not of that rock ; nor my soul careless as that sea ; which lifts its blue waves to every wind, and rolls beneath the storm ! The blast which shall lay thee low, shall spread the branches of Oithona on earth. We shall wither together, son of car-borne Morni ! The narrow house is pleasant to me, and the grey stone of the dead : For never more will I leave thy rocks, O sea-surrounded Tromathon ! Night * came on with her clouds, after the departure of Lathmon, when he went to the wars of his fathers, to the moss-covered rock of Duthormoth. Night came on. I sat in the hall, at the beam of the oak ! The wind was abroad in the trees. I heard the sound of arms. Joy rose in my face. I thought of thy return. It was the chief of Cuthal, the red-haired strength of Dunrommath. His eyes rolled in fire : The blood of my people was on his sword. They who defended Oithona fell by the gloomy chief ! What could I do ? My arm was weak. I could not lift the spear. He took me in my grief, amidst my tears he raised the sail. He feared the returning Lathmon, the brother of unhappy Oithona ! But behold he comes with his people ! The dark wave is divided before him ! Whither wilt thou turn thy steps, son of Morni ? Many are the warriors of thy foe !”

“ My

* Oithona relates how she was carried away by Dunrommath.

“ My steps never turned from battle,” Gaul said, and unsheathed his sword. “ Shall I then begin to fear, Oithona ! when thy foes are near ? Go to thy cave, my love, till our battle cease on the field. Son of Leth, bring the bows of our fathers ! The sounding quiver of Morni ! Let our three warriors bend the yew. Ourselves will lift the spear. They are an host on the rock ! Our souls are strong in war !”

Oithona went to the cave. A troubled joy rose on her mind, like the red path of lightning on a stormy cloud ! Her soul was resolved ; the tear was dried from her wildly-looking eye. Dunrommath slowly approached. He saw the son of Morni. Contempt contracted his face, a smile is on his dark-brown cheek ; his red eye rolled, half-concealed, beneath his shaggy brows !

“ Whence are the sons of the sea ?” begun the gloomy chief. “ Have the winds driven you on the rocks of Tromathon ? Or come you in search of the white-handed maid ? The sons of the unhappy, ye feeble men, come to the hand of Dunrommath ! His eye spares not the weak ; he delights in the blood of strangers. Oithona is a beam of light, and the chief of Cuthal enjoys it in secret ; wouldst thou come on its loveliness, like a cloud, son of the feeble hand ! Thou mayest come, but shalt thou return to the halls of thy fathers ?” “ Dost thou not know me,” said Gaul, “ red-haired chief of Cuthal ? Thy feet were swift on the heath, in the battle of car-borne Lathmon ; when the sword of Morni’s son pursued his host, in Morven’s woody land. Dunrommath ! thy words are mighty, for thy warriors gather behind thee.

But do I fear them, son of pride? I am not of the race of the feeble!"

Gaul advanced in his arms; Dunrommath thrunk behind his people. But the spear of Gaul pierced the gloomy chief; his sword lopped off his head, as it bended in death. The son of Morni shook it thrice by the lock; the warriors of Dunrommath fled. The arrows of Morven pursued them: Ten fell on the mossy rocks. The rest lift the sounding fail, and bound on the troubled deep. Gaul advanced towards the cave of Oithona. He beheld a youth leaning on a rock. An arrow had pierced his side; his eye rolled faintly beneath his helmet. The soul of Morni's son was sad, he came and spoke the words of peace.

"Can the hand of Gaul heal thee, youth of the mournful brow? I have searched for the herbs of the mountains; I have gathered them on the secret banks of their streams. My hand has closed the wound of the brave, their eyes have blessed the son of Morni. Where dwelt thy fathers, warrior? Were they of the sons of the mighty? Sadness shall come, like night, on thy native streams. Thou art fallen in thy youth!"

"My fathers," replied the stranger, "were of the race of the mighty; but they shall not be sad; for my fame is departed like morning mist. High walls rise on the banks of Duvran-na, and see their mossy towers in the stream; a rock ascends behind them with its bending pines. Thou mayst behold it far distant. There my brother dwells. He is renowned in battle: Give him this glittering helm."

The helmet fell from the hand of Gaul. It was the wounded Oithona! She had armed herself in

in the cave, and came in search of death. Her heavy eyes are half closed; the blood pours from her heaving side. "Son of Morni!" she said, "prepare the narrow tomb. Sleep grows, like darkness, on my soul. The eyes of Oithona are dim! O had I dwelt at Duvranna, in the bright beam of my fame! then had my years come on with joy; the virgins would then bless my steps. But I fall in youth, son of Morni! My father shall blush in his hall!"

She fell pale on the rock of Tromathon. The mournful warrior raised her tomb. He came to Morven; we saw the darkness of his soul. Ossian took the harp in the praise of Oithona. The brightness of the face of Gaul returned. But his sigh rose, at times, in the midst of his friends; like blasts that shake their unfrequent wings, after the stormy winds are laid!



C R O M A:

A

P O E M.

L. 6

ARGUMENT.

Malvina the daughter of Toscar is overheard by Ossian lamenting the death of Oscar her lover. Ossian, to divert her grief, relates his own actions in an expedition which he undertook, at Fingal's command, to aid Crothar the petty king of Croma, a country in Ireland, against Rothmar who invaded his dominions. The story is delivered down thus in tradition. Crothar king of Croma being blind with age, and his son too young for the field, Rothmar the chief of Tromlo resolved to avail himself of the opportunity offered of annexing the dominions of Crothar to his own. He accordingly marched into the country subject to Crothar, but which he held of Arth or Artho, who was, at the time, supreme king of Ireland.

Crothar being, on account of his age and blindness, unfit for action, sent for aid to Fingal king of Scotland, who ordered his son Ossian to the relief of Crothar. But, before his arrival, Fovar-Gormo, the son of Crothar, attacking Rothmar, was slain himself, and his forces totally defeated. Ossian renewed the war, came to battle, killed Rothmar, and routed his army. Croma being thus delivered of its enemies, Ossian returned to Scotland.

C R O M A:

A

P O E M.

“IT was the voice of my love ! seldom art thou, in the dreams of Malvina ! Open your airy halls, O fathers of Toscar of shields : Unfold the gates of your clouds : the steps of Malvina are near. I have heard a voice in my dream. I feel the fluttering of my soul. Why didst thou come, O blast ! from the dark-rolling face of the lake ? Thy rustling wing was in the tree ; the dream of Malvina fled. But she beheld her love, when his robe of mist flew on the wind. A sun-beam was on his skirts, they glittered like the gold of the stranger. It was the voice of my love ! seldom comes he to my dreams !”

“ But thou dwellest in the soul of Malvina, son of mighty Ossian ! My sighs arise with the beam of the east ; my tears descend with the drops of night. I was a lovely tree, in thy presence, Oscar, with all my branches round me ; but thy death came like a blast from the desert, and laid my green head low. The spring returned with its showers ; no leaf of mine arose ! The virgins saw me silent in the hall ; they touched the harp of joy. The tear was on the cheek of Malvina : the virgins beheld me in my grief. Why art thou sad ? they said ; thou first of the maids of Lutha ! Was he lovely as the beam of the morning, and stately in thy fight ?”
Pleasant.

Pleasant is thy song in Ossian's ear, daughter of streamy Lutha ! Thou hast heard the music of departed bards, in the dream of thy rest, when sleep fell on thine eyes, at the murmur of Moruth *. When thou didst return from the chase, in the day of the sun, thou hast heard the music of bards, and thy song is lovely ! It is lovely, O Malvina ! but it melts the soul : There is a joy in grief when peace dwells in the breast of the sad. But sorrow wastes the mournful, O daughter of Toscar ! and their days are few ! They fall away, like the flower on which the sun hath looked in his strength after the mildew has passed over it, when its head is heavy with the drops of night. Attend to the tale of Ossian, O maid ! He remembers the days of his youth !

The king commanded : I raised my sails, and rushed into the bay of Croma ; into Croma's founding bay in lovely Inisfail *. High on the coast arose the towers of Crothar king of spears ; Crothar renowned in the battles of his youth ; but age dwelt then around the chief. Rothmar had raised the sword against the hero ; and the wrath of Fingal burned. He sent Ossian to meet Rothmar in war, for the chief of Croma was the friend of his youth. I sent the bard before me with songs. I came into the hall of Crothar. There sat the chief amidst the arms of his fathers, but his eyes had failed. His grey locks waved around a staff, on which the warrior leaned. He hummed the song of other times, when the sound of our arms reached his ears. Crothar rose, stretched his aged hand, and blessed the son of Fingal.

“ Ossian !” said the hero, “ the strength of Crothar's arm has failed. O could I lift the sword,

* Mor'ruth, *great stream.*

† *Inisfail*, one of the ancient names of Ireland.

Word, as on the day that Fingal fought at Strutha ! He was the first of men ! but Crothar had also his fame. The king of Morven praised me ; he placed on my arm the bossy shield of Calthar, whom the king had slain in his wars. Dost thou not behold it on the wall, for Crothar's eyes have failed ? Is thy strength, like thy fathers, Ossian ? let the aged feel thine arm !”

I gave my arm to the king ; he felt it with his aged hands. The sigh rose in his breast, and his tears came down. “ Thou art strong, my son, he said, but not like the king of Morven ! But who is like the hero among the mighty in war ! Let the feast of my hall be spread ; and let my bards exalt the song. Great is he that is within my walls, ye sons of echoing Croma !” The feast is spread. The harp is heard ; and joy is in the hall. But it was joy covering a sigh, that darkly dwelt in every breast. It was like the faint beam of the moon spread on a cloud in heaven. At length the music ceased, and the aged king of Croma spoke ; he spoke without a tear, but sorrow swelled in the midst of his voice.

“ Son of Fingal ! behold'st thou not the darkness of Crothar's joy ? My soul was not sad at the feast ; when my people lived before me. I rejoiced in the presence of strangers, when my son shone in the hall. But, Ossian, he is a beam that is departed. He left no streak of light behind. He is fallen, son of Fingal ! in the wars of his father. Rothmar the chief of grassy Tromlo heard that these eyes had failed ; he heard that my arms were fixed in the hall, and the pride of his soul arose ! He came towards Croma ; my people fell before him. I took my arms in my wrath, but what could fightless Crothar do ? My steps were unequal ; my grief was great. I wished for the days that were past. Days ! wherein
I fought ;

I fought ; and won in the field of blood. My son returned from the chace ; the fair-haired Fovar-gormo *. He had not lifted his sword in battle, for his arm was young. But the soul of the youth was great : the fire of valour burnt in his eyes. He saw the disordered steps of his father, and his sighs arose." " King of Croma," he said, " is it because thou hast no son ; is it for the weakness of Fovar-gormo's arm that thy sighs arise ? I begin, my father, to feel my strength ; I have drawn the sword of my youth ; and I have bent the bow. Let me meet this Rothmar, with the sons of Croma : let me meet him, O my father ! I feel my burning soul !" " And thou shalt meet him, I said, son of the sightless Crothar ! But let others advance before thee, that I may hear the tread of thy feet at thy return ; for my eyes behold thee not, fair-haired Fovar-gormo ! He went, he met the foe ; he fell. Rothmar advances to Croma. He who slew my son is near with all his pointed spears."

This is no time to fill the shell, I replied, and took my spear ! My people saw the fire of my eyes ; they all arose around. Through night we strode along the heath. Grey morning rose in the east. A green narrow vale appeared before us ; nor wanting was its winding stream. The dark host of Rothmar are on its banks, with all their glittering arms. We fought along the vale. They fled. Rothmar sunk beneath my sword ! Day had not descended in the west, when I brought his arms to Crothar. The aged hero felt them with his hands ; and joy brightened over all his thoughts.

The people gathered to the hall. The shells of the feast are heard. Ten harps are strung : five
bards.

* Foabhar-gorm, the blue point of steel.

bards advance, and sing, by turns*, the praise of Ossian; they poured forth their burning souls, and the string answered to their voice. The joy of Croma was great: for peace returned to the land. The night came on with silence; the morning returned with joy. No foe came in darkness, with his glittering spear. The joy of Croma was great; for the gloomy Rothmar had fallen!

I raised

* Those extempore compositions were in great repute among succeeding bards. The pieces extant of that kind show more of the good ear, than of the poetical genius of their authors. The translator has only met with one poem of this sort which he thinks worthy of being preserved. It is a thousand years later than Ossian, but the authors seem to have observed his manner, and adopted some of his expressions. The story of it is this: Five bards, passing the night in the house of a chief, who was a poet himself, went severally to make their observations on, and return with an extempore description of, night. The night happened to be one in October, as appears from the poem, and in the north of Scotland; it has all that variety which the bards ascribe to it in their descriptions.

FIRST BARD.

NIGHT is dull and dark. The clouds rest on the hills. No star with green trembling beam; no moon looks from the sky. I hear the blast in the wood; but I hear it distant far. The stream of the valley murmurs; but its murmur is sullen and sad. From the tree at the grave of the dead the long-howling owl is heard. I see a dim form on the plain! It is a ghost! it fades, it flies. Some funeral shall pass this way: the meteor marks the path.

The distant dog is howling from the hut of the hill. The stag lies on the mountain moss: the hind is at his side. She hears the wind in its branchy horns. She starts, but lies again.

The roe is in the cleft of the rock: the heath-cock's head is beneath his wing. No beast, no bird is abroad, but the owl and the howling fox. She on a leafless tree; he in a cloud on the hill.

Dark, panting, trembling, sad, the traveller has lost his way. Through shrubs, through thoras, he goes, along the gurgling

I raised my voice for Fovar-gormo, when they laid the chief in earth. The aged Crothar was there, but his sigh was not heard. He searched for ~

gurgling rill. He fears the rock and the fen. He fears the ghost of night. The old tree groans to the blast; the falling branch resounds. The wind drives the withered burs, clung together, along the grafs. It is the light tread of a ghost! He trembles amidst the night.

Dark, dusky, howling is night, cloudy, windy, and full of ghosts! the dead are abroad! my friends, receive me from the night.

SECOND BARD.

The wind is up. The shower descends. The spirit of the mountain shrieks. Woods fall from high. Windows flap. The growing river roars. The traveller attempts the ford. Hark! that shriek! he dies! The storm drives the horses from the hill, the goat, the lowing cow. They tremble as drives the shower, beside the mouldering bank.

The hunter starts from sleep, in his lonely hut; he wakes the fire decayed. His wet dogs smoke around him. He fills the chinks with heath. Loud roar two mountain streams which meet beside his booth.

Sad on the side of a hill the wandering shepherd sits. The tree resounds above him. The stream roars down the rock. He waits for the rising moon to guide him to his home.

Ghosts ride on the storm to-night. Sweet is their voice between the squalls of wind. Their songs are of other worlds.

The rain is past. The dry wind blows. Streams roar, and windows flap. Cold drops fall from the roof. I see the starry sky. But the shower gathers again. The west is gloomy and dark. Night is stormy and dismal; receive me, my friends, from night.

THIRD BARD.

The wind still sounds between the hills: and whistles through the grafs of the rock. The firs fall from their place. The turfy hut is torn. The clouds, divided, fly over the sky, and show the burning stars. The meteor, token of death! flies sparkling through the gloom. It rests on the hill, I see the withered fern, the dark-browed rock, the fallen oak. Who is that in his shroud beneath the tree, by the stream?

The waves dark tumble on the lake, and lash its rocky sides. The boat is brimful in the cove; the oars on the rocking tide. A maid sits sad before the rock, and eyes the rolling stream. Her lover promised to come. She saw his boat, when

for the wound of his son, and found it in his breast.
 Joy rose in the face of the aged. He came and
 spoke to Ossian. "King of spears!" he said,
 "my son has not fallen without his fame. The
 young

when yet it was light, on the lake. Is this his broken boat
 on the shore? Are these his groans on the wind?

Hark! the hail rattles around. The slaky snow descends.
 The tops of the hills are white. The stormy winds abate.
 Various is the night and cold: receive me, my friends, from
 night.

FOURTH BARD.

Night is calm and fair; blue, starry, settled is night. The
 winds, with the clouds, are gone. They sink behind the hill.
 The moon is up on the mountain. Trees glisten: streams
 shine on the rock. Bright rolls the settled lake: bright the
 stream of the vale.

I see the trees overturned; the shocks of corn on the plain.
 The wakeful hind rebuilds the shocks, and whistles on the
 distant field.

Calm, settled, fair is night! Who comes from the place of
 the dead? That form with the robe of snow; white arms
 and dark brown-hair! It is the daughter of the chief of the
 people: she that lately fell! Come let us view thee, O maid!
 thou that hast been the delight of heroes! The blast drives
 the phantom away; white, without form, it ascends the hill.

The breezes drive the blue mist, slowly, over the narrow
 vale. It rises on the hill, and joins its head to heaven.
 Night is settled, calm, blue, starry, bright with the moon.
 Receive me not, my friends, for lovely is the night.

FIFTH BARD.

Night is calm, but dreary. The moon is in a cloud in the
 west. Slow moves that pale beam along the shaded hill.
 The distant wave is heard. The torrent murmurs on the
 rock. The cock is heard from the booth. More than half
 the night is past. The house-wife, groping in the gloom,
 rekindles the settled fire. The hunter thinks that day ap-
 proaches, and calls his bounding dogs. He ascends the hill,
 and whistles on his way. A blast removes the cloud. He
 sees the starry plough of the north. Much of the night is
 to pass. He nods by the mossy rock.

Hark! the whirlwind is in the wood! A low murmur in
 the vale! It is the mighty arm of the dead returning from
 the air.

The

young warrior did not fly ; but met death, as he went forward in his strength. Happy are they who die in youth, when their renown is heard ! The feeble will not behold them in the hall ; or smile at their trembling hands. Their memory shall be honoured in song ; the young tear of the virgin will fall. But the aged wither away, by degrees ; the fame of their youth, while yet they live, is all forgot. They fall in secret. The sigh of their son is not heard. Joy is around their tomb ; the stone of their fame is placed without a tear. Happy are they who die in youth, when their renown is around them !”

The moon sets behind the hill. The beam is still on that lofty rock. Long are the shadows of the trees. Now it is dark over all. Night is dreary, silent, and dark ; receive me, my friends, from night.

THE CHIEF.

Let clouds rest on the hills : spirits fly, and travellers fear. Let the winds of the woods arise, the sounding storms descend. Roar streams and windows flap, and green winged meteors fly ! rise the pale moon from behind her hills, or inclose her head in clouds ! night is alike to me, stormy, or gloomy the sky. Night flies before the beam, when it is poured on the hill. The young day returns from his clouds, but we return no more.

Where are our chiefs of old ? Where our kings of mighty name ? The fields of their battles are silent. Scarce their mossy tombs remain. We shall also be forgot. This lofty house shall fall. Our sons shall not behold the ruins in grass. They shall ask of the aged, “ Where stood the walls of our fathers ?”

Raise the song, and strike the harp ; send round the shells of joy. Suspend a hundred tapers on high. Youths and maids begin the dance. Let some grey bard be near me to tell the deeds of other times ; of kings renowned in our land, of chiefs we behold no more. Thus let the night pass until morning shall appear in our halls. Then let the bow be at hand, the dogs, the youths of the chase. We shall ascend the hill with day ; and awake the deer.

BERRATHON:

A

P O E M.

ARGUMENT.

Fingal, in his voyage to Lochlin, whither he had been invited by Starno the father of Agandecca, touched at Berrathon, an island of Scandinavia, where he was kindly entertained by Larthmor the petty king of the place, who was a vassal of the supreme kings of Lochlin. The hospitality of Larthmor gained him Fingal's friendship, which that hero manifested after the imprisonment of Larthmor by his own son, by sending Ossian, and Toscar, the father of Malvina, so often mentioned, to rescue Larthmor, and to punish the unnatural behaviour of Uthal. Uthal was handsome, and, by the ladies, much admired. Nina-thoma, the beautiful daughter of Tor-thoma, a neighbouring prince, fell in love and fled with him. He proved inconstant: For another lady, whose name is not mentioned, gaining his affections, he confined Nina-thoma to a desert island near the coast of Berrathon. She was relieved by Ossian, who, in company with Toscar, landing on Berrathon, defeated the forces of Uthal, and killed him in a single combat. Nina-thoma, whose love not all the bad behaviour of Uthal could erase, hearing of his death, died of grief. In the mean time Larthmor is restored, and Ossian and Toscar return in triumph to Fingal.

The poem opens with an elegy on the death of Malvina the daughter of Toscar, and closes with presages of Ossian's death.

BERRATHON:

A

P O E M.

BEND thy blue course, O stream! round the narrow plain of * Lutha. Let the green woods hang over it, from their hills: the sun look on it at noon. The thistle is there on its rock, and shakes its beard to the wind. The flower hangs its heavy head, waving, at times, to the gale! "Why dost thou awake me, O gale!" It seems to say, "I am covered with the drops of heaven? The time of my fading is near the blast that shall scatter my leaves. To-morrow shall the traveller come; he that saw me in my beauty shall come. His eyes will search the field, but they will not find me." So shall they search in vain, for the voice of Cona, after it has failed in the field. The hunter shall come forth in the morning, and the voice of my harp shall not be heard. "Where is the son of car-borne Fingal?" The tear will be on his cheek! Then come thou, O Malvina, with all thy music, come! Lay Ossian in the plain of Lutha: let his tomb rise in the lovely field.

Malvina! where art thou, with thy songs, with the soft sound of thy steps? Son † of Alpin art thou near! where is the daughter of Toscar?

"I passed,

* Lutha, *swift stream*.

† His father was one of Fingal's principal bards, and he had a poetical genius.

“ I passed, O son of Fingal, by Tor-lutha’s mossy walls. The smoke of the hall was ceased. Silence was among the trees of the hill. The voice of the chase was over. I saw the daughters of the bow. I asked about Malvina, but they answered not. They turned their faces away : thin darkness covered their beauty. They were like stars, on a rainy hill, by night, each looking faintly through her mist.”

Pleasant * be thy rest, O lovely beam ! soon hast thou set on our hill ! The steps of thy departure were stately, like the moon on the blue, trembling wave. But thou hast left us in darkness, first of the maids of Lutha ! We sit, at the rock, and there is no voice ; no light but the meteor of fire ! Soon hast thou set, O Malvina, daughter of generous Toscar ! But thou risest like the beam of the east, among the spirits of thy friends, where they sit, in their stormy halls, the chambers of the thunder ! A cloud hovers over Cona. Its blue curling sides are high. The winds are beneath it, with their wings. Within it is the dwelling † of Fingal. There the hero sits in darkness. His airy spear is in his hand. His shield, half covered with clouds, is like the darkened moon ; when one half still remains in the wave, and the other looks sickly on the field !

His friends sit around the king, on mist !
They hear the songs of Ullin : he strikes the
half-

* Ossian speaks. He calls Malvina a beam of light, and continues the metaphor throughout the paragraph.

† The description of this ideal palace of Fingal is agreeable to the notions of those times, concerning the state of the deceased, who were supposed to pursue, after death, the pleasures and employments of their former life. The situation of the Celtic heroes, in their separate state, if not entirely happy, is more agreeable than the notions of the ancient Greeks concerning their departed heroes.

half-viewless harp. He raises the feeble voice. The lesser heroes, with a thousand meteors, light the airy hall. Malvina rises in the midst; a blush is on her cheek. She beholds the unknown faces of her fathers. She turns aside her humid eyes. "Art thou come so soon?" said Fingal, "daughter of generous Toscar. Sadness dwells in the halls of Lutha. My aged son* is sad! I hear the breeze of Cona, that was wont to lift thy heavy locks. It comes to the hall, but thou art not there. Its voice is mournful among the arms of thy fathers! Go, with thy rustling wing, O breeze! sigh on Malvina's tomb. It rises yonder beneath the rock, at the blue stream of Lutha. The maids† are departed to their place. Thou alone, O breeze! mournest there."

But who comes from the dusky west, supported on a cloud? A smile is on his grey, watery face. His locks of mist fly on wind. He bends forward on his airy spear. It is thy father, Malvina! "Why shinest thou, so soon, on our clouds," he says, "O lovely light of Lutha! But thou wert sad, my daughter. Thy friends had passed away. The sons of little men‡ were in the hall. None remained of the heroes, but Ossian king of spears!"

VOL. I.

M

And

* Ossian; who had a great friendship for Malvina, both on account of her love for his son Oscar, and her attention to himself.

† That is, the young virgins who sung the funeral elegy over her tomb.

‡ Tradition is entirely silent concerning what passed in the north, immediately after the death of Fingal and all his heroes; by which it would seem, that the actions of their successors were not to be compared to those of the renowned Fingalians.

And dost thou remember Ossian, car-borne Toscar*, son of Conloch? The battles of our youth were many. Our swords went together to the field. They saw us coming like two falling rocks. The sons of the stranger fled. "There come the warriors of Cona!" they said, "Their steps are in the paths of the flying!" Draw near son of Alpin, to the song of the aged. The deeds of other times are in my soul. My memory beams on the days that are past. On the days of mighty Toscar, when our path was in the deep. Draw near, son of Alpin, to the last sound of the voice of Cona!

The king of Morven commanded. I raised my sails to the wind. Toscar chief of Lutha stood at my side, I rose on the dark-blue wave. Our course was to sea-surrounded Berrathon†, the isle of many storms. There dwelt, with his locks of age, the stately strength of Larthmor, Larthmor who spread the feast of shells to Fingal, when he went to Starno's halls, in the days of Agandecca. But when the chief was old, the pride of his son arose; the pride of fair-haired Uthal, the love of a thousand maids. He bound the aged Larthmor, and dwelt in his sounding halls!

Long pined the king in his cave, beside his rolling sea. Day did not come to his dwelling; nor the burning oak by night. But the wind of ocean was there, and the parting beam of the moon. The red star looked on the king, when it trembled on the western wave. Snitho came to Selma's hall: Snitho the friend of Larthmor's youth. He told of the king of Berrathon: The
wrath

* Toscar was the son of that Conloch, who was also father to the lady whose unfortunate death is related in the last episode of the second book of Fingal.

† Berrathon, a promontory in the midst of waves.

wrath of Fingal arose. Thrice he assumed the spear, resolved to stretch his hand to Uthal. But the memory* of his deeds rose before the king. He sent his son and Toscar. Our joy was great on the rolling sea. We often half-unsheathed our swords. For never before had we fought alone, in battles of the spear.

Night came down on the ocean. The winds departed on their wings. Cold and pale is the moon. The red stars lift their heads on high. Our course is slow along the coast of Berrathon. The white waves tumble on the rocks. "What voice is that," said Toscar, "which comes between the sounds of the waves? It is soft but mournful, like the voice of departed bards. But I behold a maid†. She sits on the rock alone. Her head bends on her arm of snow. Her dark hair is in the wind. Hear, son of Fingal, her song, it is smooth as the gliding stream." We came to the silent bay, and heard the maid of night.

"How long will ye roll around me, blue-tumbling waters of ocean? My dwelling was not always in caves, nor beneath the whistling tree. The feast was spread in Torthoma's hall. My father delighted in my voice. The youths beheld me in the steps of my loveliness. They blessed the dark-haired Nina-thoma. It was then thou didst come, O Uthal! like the sun of heaven! The souls of the virgins are thine, son of generous Larthmor! But why dost thou leave

M 2

me

* The meaning is, that Fingal remembered his own great actions, and consequently would not fully them by engaging in a petty war against Uthal, who was so far his inferior in valour and power.

† Nina-thoma, the daughter of Torthoma, who had been confined to a desert island by her lover Uthal.

me alone, in the midst of roaring waters? Was my soul dark with thy death? Did my white hand lift the sword? Why then hast thou left me alone, king of high Finthormo * !”

The tear started from my eye, when I heard the voice of the maid. I stood before her in my arms. I spoke the words of peace! “Lovely dweller of the cave! What sigh is in thy breast? Shall Ossian lift his sword in thy presence, the destruction of thy foes? Daughter of Torthoma, rise. I have heard the words of thy grief. The race of Morven are around thee, who never injured the weak. Come to our dark-bosomed ship! thou brighter than that setting moon! Our course is to the rocky Berrathon, to the echoing walls of Finthormo.” She came in her beauty; she came with all her lovely steps. Silent joy brightened in her face; as when the shadows fly from the field of spring; the blue stream is rolling in brightness, and the green bush bends over its course!

The morning rose with its beams. We came to Rothma’s bay. A boar rushed from the wood: My spear pierced his side, and he fell. I rejoiced over the blood †, I foresaw my growing fame. But now the sound of Uthal’s train came, from the high Finthormo. They spread over the heath to the chace of the boar. Himself comes slowly on, in the pride of his strength. He lifts two pointed spears. On his side is the hero’s sword. Three youths carry his polished bows.

The

* Finthormo, the palace of Uthal. The names in this episode are not of a Celtic original.

† Ossian might have thought that his killing a boar on his first landing in Berrathon was a good omen of his future success in that island. The present Highlanders look, with a degree of superstition, upon the success of their first action, after they have engaged in any desperate undertaking.

The bounding of five dogs is before him. His heroes move on, at a distance, admiring the steps of the king. Stately was the son of Larthmor! But his soul was dark! Dark as the troubled face of the moon, when it foretells the storms!

We rose on the heath before the king. He stopt in the midst of his course. His heroes gathered around. A grey-haired bard advanced. "Whence are the sons of the strangers!" began the bard of song. "The children of the unhappy come to Berrathon; to the sword of carborne Uthal. He spreads no feast in his hall. The blood of strangers is on his streams. It from Selma's walls ye come, from the mossy walls of Fingal, choose three youths to go to your king to tell of the fall of his people. Perhaps the hero may come and pour his blood on Uthal's sword. So shall the fame of Finthorino arise, like the growing tree of the vale!"

"Never will it rise, O bard!" I said in the pride of my wrath. "He would shrink from the presence of Fingal, whose eyes are the flames of death. The son of Conihal comes, and kings vanish before him. They are rolled together, like mist, by the breath of his rage. Shall three tell to Fingal, that his people fell? Yes! they may tell it, bard! But his people shall fall with fame!"

I stood in the darkness of my strength. Toiccar drew his sword at my side. The foe came on like a stream. The mingled sound of death arose. Man took man; shield met shield; steel mixed its beams with steel. Darts his through air. Spears ring on mails. Swords on broken bucklers bound. As the noise of an aged grove beneath the roaring winds, when a thousand ghosts

break the trees by night, such was the din of arms! But Uthal fell beneath my sword. The sons of Berrathon fled. It was then I saw him in his beauty, and the tear hung in my eye! "Thou art fallen *, young tree," I said, "with all thy beauty round thee. Thou art fallen on thy plains, and the field is bare. The winds come from the desert! There is no sound in thy leaves! Lovely art thou in death, son of car-borne Larthmor."

Nina-thoma sat on the shore. She heard the sound of battle. She turned her red eyes on Lethmal, the grey-haired bard of Selma. He alone had remained on the coast, with the daughter of Torthoma. "Son of the times of old!" she said, "I hear the noise of death. Thy friends have met with Uthal, and the chief is low! O that I had remained on the rock, inclosed with the tumbling waves! Then would my soul be sad, but his death would not reach my ear. Art thou fallen on thy heath, O son of high Finthormo! Thou didst leave me on a rock, but my soul was full of thee. Son of high Finthormo! art thou fallen on thy heath?"

She rose pale in her tears. She saw the bloody shield of Uthal. She saw it in Oflian's hand. Her steps were distracted on the heath. She flew. She found him. She fell. Her soul came forth in a sigh. Her hair is spread on his face. My bursting tears descend. A tomb arose
on

* To mourn over the fall of their enemies was a practice universal among the Celtic heroes. This is more agreeable to humanity, than the shameful insulting of the dead, so common in Homer, and after him, servilely copied by all his imitators, the humane Virgil not excepted, who have been more successful in borrowing the imperfections of that great poet, than in their imitations of his beauties.

on the unhappy. My song of woe was heard. "Rest, hapless children of youth! Rest at the noise of that mossy stream! The virgins will see your tomb, at the chace, and turn away their weeping eyes. Your fame will be in song. The voice of the harp will be heard in your praise. The daughters of Selma shall hear it: Your renown shall be in other lands. Rest, children of youth, at the noise of the mossy stream!"

Two days we remained on the coast. The heroes of Berrathon convened. We brought Larthmor to his halls. The feast of shells is spread. The joy of the aged was great. He looked to the arms of his fathers. The arms which he left in his hall, when the pride of Uthal rose. We were renowned before Larthmor. He blessed the chiefs of Morven. He knew not that his son was low, the stately strength of Uthal! They had told, that he had retired to the woods, with the tears of grief. They had told it, but he was silent in the tomb of Rothma's heath.

On the fourth day we raised our sails, to the roar of the northern wind. Larthmor came to the coast. His bards exalted the song. The joy of the king was great, he looked to Rothma's gloomy heath. He saw the tomb of his son. The memory of Uthal rose. "Who of my heroes," he said, "lies there? He seems to have been of the kings of men. Was he renowned in my halls, before the pride of Uthal rose?" "Ye are silent, sons of Berrathon! is the king of heroes low? My heart melts for thee, O Uthal! though thy hand was against thy father. O that I had remained in the cave! that my son had dwelt in Finthormo! I might have heard the tread of his feet, when he went to the chace of the boar. I might have heard his voice on the

blast of my cave. Then would my soul be glad :
But now darkness dwells in my halls."

Such were my deeds, son of Alpin, when the
arm of my youth was strong. Such the * ac-
tions of Toscar, the car-borne son of Conloch.
But Toscar is on his flying cloud. I am alone
at Lutha. My voice is like the last sound of the
wind, when it forsakes the woods. But Ossian
shall not be long alone. He sees the mist that
shall receive his ghost. He beholds the mist that
shall form his robe, when he appears on his hills.
The sons of feeble men shall behold me, and ad-
mire the stature of the chiefs of old. They shall
creep to their caves. They shall look to the sky
with fear ; for my steps shall be in the clouds.
Darkness shall roll on my side.

Lead, son of Alpin, lead the aged to his
woods. The winds begin to rise. The dark
wave of the lake resounds. Bends there not a
tree from Mora with its branches bare ? It
bends, son of Alpin, in the rustling blast. My
harp hangs on a blasted branch. The sound of
its strings is mournful. Does the wind touch
thee, O harp ! or is it some passing ghost ! It is
the hand of Malvina ! Bring me the harp, son
of Alpin. Another song shall rise. My soul
shall depart in the sound. My fathers shall hear
it in their airy hall. Their dim faces shall hang,
with joy, from their clouds ; and their hands
receive their son. The aged oak bends over the
stream. It sighs with all its moss. The wither-
ed fern whistles near, and mixes, as it waves,
with Ossian's hair.

" Strike the harp, and raise the song : Be near,
with all your wings, ye winds. Bear the mournful
sound away to Fingal's airy hall. Bear it to Fin-
gal's

* Ossian speaks.

gal's hall, that he may hear the voice of his son.
 'The voice of him that praised the mighty !' .

" The blast of north opens thy gates, O king !
 I behold thee sitting on mist, dimly gleaming in
 all thine arms. Thy form now is not the terror
 of the valiant. It is like a watery cloud ; when
 we see the stars behind it, with their weeping
 eyes. Thy shield is the aged moon : Thy sword
 a vapour half-kindled with fire. Dim and feeble
 is the chief, who travelled in brightness before !
 But thy steps * are on the winds of the desert.
 The storms are darkening in thy hand. Thou
 takest the sun in thy wrath, and hidest him in
 thy clouds. The sons of little men are afraid.
 A thousand showers descend. But when thou
 comest forth in thy mildness, the gale of the
 morning is near thy course. The son laughs in
 his blue fields. The grey streams winds in its
 vale. The bushes shake their green heads in
 the wind. The roes bound towards the desert."

" There is a murmur in the heath ! The stormy
 winds abate ! I hear the voice of Fingal. Long
 has it been absent from mine ear ! " Come,
 Ossian, come away," he says. Fingal has recei-
 ved his fame We passed away, like flames that
 had shone for a season. Our departure was in
 renown. Though the plains of our battles are
 dark and silent ; our fame is in the four grey
 stones. The voice of Ossian has been heard.

M 5

The

* This description of the power of Fingal over the winds and storms, and the image of his taking the sun, and hiding him in the clouds, do not correspond with the preceding paragraph, where he is represented as a feeble ghost, and no more the TERROR OF THE VALIANT ; but it agrees with the notion of the times concerning the souls of the deceased, who, it was supposed, had the command of the winds and storms, but took no concern in the affairs of men.

The harp has been strung in Selma. "Come, Ossian, come away," he says, "come, fly with thy fathers on clouds." I come, I come, thou king of men! The life of Ossian fails. I begin to vanish on Cona. My steps are not seen in Selma. Beside the stone of Mora I shall fall asleep. The winds whistling in my grey hair, shall not awaken me. Depart on thy wings, O wind! thou canst not disturb the rest of the bard. The night is long, but his eyes are heavy. Depart, thou rustling blast.

"But why art thou sad, son of Fingal? Why grows the cloud of thy soul? The chiefs of other times are departed. They have gone without their fame. The sons of future years shall pass away. Another race shall arise. The people are like the waves of ocean: Like the leaves of woody Morven, they pass away in the rustling blast, and other leaves lift their green heads on high."

Did thy beauty last, O Ryno*? Stood the strength of car-borne Oscar? Fingal himself departed.

* Ryno, the son of Fingal, who was killed in Ireland, in the war against Swaran, was remarkable for the beauty of his person, his swiftness and great exploits. Minvane, the daughter of Morni, and sister to Gaul, was in love with Ryno. Her lamentation over her lover follows.

SHE blushing sad, from Morven's rocks, bends over the darkly-rolling sea. She sees the youth in all their arms. Where, Ryno, where art thou?

Our dark looks told that he was low! That pale the hero flew on clouds! That in the grass of Morven's hills his feeble voice was heard in wind!

And is the son of Fingal fallen on Ullin's mossy plains? Strong was the arm that vanquished him! Ah me! I am alone! Alone

parted. The halls of his fathers forgot his steps. Shalt thou then remain, thou aged bard ! when the mighty have failed ? But my fame shall remain, and grow like the oak of Morven ; which lifts its broad head to the storm, and rejoices in the course of the wind !

Alone I shall not be, ye winds ! that lift my dark-brown hair. My sighs shall not long mix with your stream ; for I must sleep with Ryno.

I see thee not, with beauty's steps, returning from the chace. The night is round Minvane's love. Dark silence dwells with Ryno.

Where are thy dogs, and where thy bow ? Thy shield that was so strong ? Thy sword like heaven's descending fire ? The bloody spear of Ryno ?

I see them mixed in thy deep ship ; I see them stained with blood. No arms are in thy narrow hall, O darkly-dwelling Ryno !

When will the morning come, and say, " Arise, thou king of spears ! Arise, the hunters are abroad. The hinds are near thee, Ryno ! "

Away, thou fair-haired morning, away ! the slumbering king hears thee not ! The hinds bound over his narrow tomb : for death dwells around young Ryno.

But I will tread softly, my king ! and steal to the bed of thy repose. Minvane will lie in silence, nor disturb the slumbering Ryno.

The maids shall seek me ; but they shall not find me : They shall follow my departure with songs. But I shall not hear you, O maids ! I sleep with fair-haired Ryno.

CATHLIN OF CLUTHA:

A

P O E M.

K 6

ARGUMENT.

An address to Malvina, the daughter of Toscar. The poet relates the arrival of Cathlin in Selma, to solicit aid against Duth-carmor of Clutha, who had killed Cathmol, for the sake of his daughter Lanul. Fingal declining to make a choice among his heroes, who were all claiming the command of the expedition; they retired *each to his hill of ghosts*; to be determined by dreams. The spirit of Trenmor appears to Ossian and Oscar: they set sail, from the bay of Carmona, and, on the fourth day, appear off the valley of Rath-col, in Inis-huna, where Duth-carmor had fixed his residence. Ossian dispatches a bard to Duth-carmor to demand battle. Night comes on. The distress of Cathlin of Clutha. Ossian devolves the command on Oscar, who, according to the custom of the kings of Morven, before battle, retired to a neighbouring hill. Upon the coming on of day, the battle joins. Oscar and Duth-carmor meet. The latter falls. Oscar carries the mail and helmet of Duth-carmor to Cathlin, who had retired from the field. Cathlin is discovered to be the daughter of Cathmol, in disguise, who had been carried off, by force, by, and had made her escape from, Duth-carmor.

CATHLIN OF CLUTHA.

Λ

POEM.

* COME, thou beam that art lonely, from watching in the night! The squally winds are around thee from all their echoing hills: Red, over my hundred streams, are the light-covered paths of the dead. They rejoice, on the eddying winds, in the season of night. Dwells there no joy in song, white hand of the harps of Lutha? Awake the voice of the string; roll my soul to me. It is a stream that has failed. Malvina, pour the song.

I hear thee from thy darkness, in Selma, thou that watchest, lonely, by night! Why didst thou

* The traditions which accompany this poem inform us, that it went, of old, under the name of *Laoi-Oi-lutha*; i.e. the *hymn of the maid of Lutha*. They pretend also to fix the time of its composition to the third year after the death of Fingal; that is, during the expedition of Fergus the son of Fingal, to the banks of *Uisga-duthon*. In support of this opinion, the Highland senachies have prefixed to this poem an address of Ossian, to Congal the young son of Fergus, which I have rejected, as having no manner of connection with the piece. It has poetical merit; and, probably, it was the opening of one of Ossian's other poems, though the bards injudiciously transferred it to the piece now before us.

“ Congal, son of Fergus of Durath, thou light between thy locks, ascend to the rock of Selma, to the oak of the breaker of shields. Look over the bosom of night, it is streaked with the red paths of the dead: look on the night of ghosts, and kindle, O Congal! thy soul. Be not, like the moon on a stream, lonely in a midst of clouds: darkness closes around it; and the beam departs. Depart not, son of Fergus! ere thou markest the field with thy sword. Ascend to the rock of Selma; to the oak of the breaker of shields.

thou with-hold the song from Offian's failing soul? As the falling brook to the ear of the hunter, descending from his storm-covered hill; in a sun-beam rolls the echoing stream; he hears, and shakes his dewy locks: such is the voice of Lutha to the friend of the spirit of heroes. My swelling bosom beats high. I look back on the days that are past. Come, thou beam that art lonely, from watching in the night!

In the echoing bay of Carmona* we saw, one day, the bounding ship. On high, hung a broken shield; it was marked with wandering blood. Forward came a youth, in arms, and stretched his pointless spear. Long, over his tearful eyes, hung his loose disordered locks. Fingal gave the shell of kings. The words of the stranger arose. "In his hall lies Cathmol of Clutha, by the wind-
ing

* Car-mona, *bay of the dark brown hills*, an arm of the sea, in the neighbourhood of Selma. In this paragraph are mentioned the signals presented to Fingal by those who came to demand his aid. The suppliants held, in one hand, a shield covered with blood, and, in the other, a broken spear; the first a symbol of the death of their friends, the last an emblem of their own helpless situation. If the king chose to grant succours, which generally was the case, he reached to them *the shell of feasts*, as a token of his hospitality and friendly intentions towards them.

It may not be disagreeable to the reader to lay here before him the ceremony of the Cran-tara, which was of a similar nature, and, till very lately, used in the Highlands. When the news of an enemy came to the residence of the chief, he immediately killed a goat with his own sword, dipped the end of a half-burnt piece of wood in the blood, and gave it to one of his servants, to be carried to the next hamlet. From hamlet to hamlet this *teffera* was carried with the utmost expedition, and, in the space of a few hours, the whole clan were in arms, and convened in an appointed place; the name of which was the only word that accompanied the delivery of the *Cran-tara*. This symbol was the manifesto of the chief, by which he threatened fire and sword to those of his clan that did not immediately appear at his standard.

ing of his own dark streams. Duth-cormar saw white-bosomed Lanul *, and peirc'd her father's side. In the rushy desert were my steps He fled in the season of night. Give thine aid to Cathlin to revenge his father. I fought thee not as a beam in a land of clouds. Thou, like the sun, art known, king of echoing Selma !”

Selma's king looked around. In his presence, we rose in arms. But who should lift the shield? for all had claimed the war. The night came down; we strode, in silence; each to his hill of ghosts: that spirits might descend, in our dreams, to mark us for the field. We struck the shield of the dead: we raised the hum of songs. We thrice called the ghosts of our fathers. We laid us down in dreams. Trenmor came, before mine eyes, the tall form of other years! His blue hosts were behind him in half-diminished rows. Scarce seen is their strife in mist, or their stretching forward to deaths. I listened; but no sound was there. The forms were empty wind!

I started from the dream of ghosts. On a sudden blast flew my whistling hair. Low-sounding, in the oak, is the departure of the dead. I took my shield from its bough. Onward came the rattling of steel. It was Oscar † of Lego. He

* Lanul, *full-eyed*, a surname which, according to tradition, was bestowed on the daughter of Cathmol, on account of her beauty; this tradition, however, may have been founded on that partiality which the bards have shown to *Cathlin of Clutha*; for, according to them, *no falsehood could dwell in the soul of the lovely*.

† Oscar is here called *Oscar of Lego*, from his mother being the daughter of Branno, a powerful chief, on the banks of that lake. It is remarkable that Ossian addresses no poem to Malvina in which her lover Oscar was not one of the principal actors. His attention to her, after the death of his son, shows that delicacy of sentiment is not confined, as some fondly imagine, to our own polished times.

He had seen his fathers. "As rushes forth the blast, on the bosom of whitening waves; so careless shall my course be, through ocean, to the dwelling of foes. I have seen the dead, my father! My beating soul is high! My fame is bright before me, like the streak of light on a cloud, when the broad sun comes forth, red traveller of the sky!"

"Grandson of Branno," I said; "not Oscar alone shall meet the foe. I rush forward, thro' ocean, to the woody dwelling of heroes. Let us contend, my son, like eagles, from one rock; when they lift their broad wings, against the stream of winds." We raised our sails in Carmona. From three ships, they marked my shield on the wave, as I looked on nightly Ton-thena*, red traveller between the clouds. Four days came the breeze abroad. Lumon came forward in mist. In winds were its hundred groves. Sun-beams marked, at times, its brown side. White, leapt the foamy streams, from all its echoing rocks.

A green field, in the bosom of hills, winds silent with its own blue stream. Here, amidst the waving of oaks, were the dwelling of kings of old. But silence, for many dark-brown years, had settled in grassy Rath-col†; for the race of heroes

* Ton-thena, *fire of the wave*, was the remarkable star mentioned in the seventh book of Temora, which directed the course of Lathion to Ireland. It seems to have been well known to those who sailed on that sea which divides Ireland from South-Britain. As the course of Ossian was along the coast of Inis-huna, he mentions with propriety that star which directed the voyage of the colony from that country to Ireland.

† Rath-col, *woody field*, does not appear to have been the residence of Duth-carmor; he seems rather to have been forced

heroes had failed, along the pleasant vale. Duth-carmor was here, with his people, dark rider of the wave. Ton-thena had hid her head in the sky. He bound his white-bosomed sails. His course is on the hill of Rath-col, to the seats of roes. We came. I sent the bard, with songs, to call the foe to fight. Duth-carmor heard him, with joy. The king's soul was like a beam of fire; a beam of fire, marked with sinoak, rushing, varied, thro' the bosom of night. The deeds of Duth-carmor were dark, tho' his arm was strong.

Night came, with the gathering of clouds. By the beam of the oak we sat down. At a distance stood Cathling of Clutha. I saw the changeful * soul of the stranger. As shadows fly over the field of grais, so various is Cathlin's cheek. It was fair within locks, that rose on Rath-col's wind. I did not rush, amidst his soul, with my words. I bade the song to rise.

“ Oscar

forced thither by a storm; at least I should think that to be the meaning of the poet, from his expression, that *Ton-thena had hid her head*, and that *he bound his white-bosomed sails*; which is as much as to say, that the weather was stormy, and that Duth-carmor put into the bay of Rath-col for shelter.

* From this circumstance, succeeding bards feigned that Cathlin, who is here in the disguise of a young warrior, had fallen in love with Duth-carmor at a feast, to which he had been invited by her father. Her love was converted into detestation for him, after he had murdered her father. But as those rain-bows of heaven are changeful, say my authors, speaking of women, she felt the return of her former passion, upon the approach of Duth-carmor's danger. I myself, who think more favourably of the sex, must attribute the agitation of Cathlin's mind to her extreme sensibility to the injuries done her by Duth-carmor: and this opinion is favoured by the sequel of the story.

“Oscar of Lego,” I said, “be thine the secret hill * to-night. Strike the shield, like Morven’s kings. With day, thou shalt lead in war. From my rock, I shall see thee, Oscar, a dreadful form ascending in fight, like the appearance of ghosts, amidst the storms they raise. Why should mine eyes return to the dim times of old, ere yet the song had burst forth, like the sudden rising of winds? But the years, that are past, are marked with mighty deeds. As the nightly rider of waves looks up to Ton-thena of beams : so let us turn our eyes to Trenmor, the father of kings.”

“Wide in Caracha’s echoing field, Carmal had poured his tribes. They were a dark ridge of waves. The grey-haired bards were like moving foam on their face. They kindled the strife around, with their red-rolling eyes. Nor alone were the dwellers of rocks; a son of Loda was there ; a voice, in his own dark land, to call the ghosts from on high. On his hill he had dwelt, in Lochlin, in the midst of a leafless grove. Five stones lifted, near, their heads. Loud roared his rushing stream. He often raised his voice to the winds, when meteors marked their nightly wings; when the dark-robed moon was rolled behind her hill. Nor unheard-of ghosts was he! They came with

* This passage alludes to the well-known custom among the ancient kings of Scotland, to retire from their army on the night preceding a battle. The story which Ossian introduces in the next paragraph concerns the fall of the Druids. It is said in many old poems, that the Druids, in the extremity of their affairs, had solicited and obtained aid from Scandinavia. Among the auxiliaries there came many pretended magicians, which circumstance Ossian alludes to in his description of the *son of Loda*. Magic and incantation could not, however, prevail; for Trenmor, assisted by the valour of his son Trathal, entirely broke the power of the Druids.

with the sound of eagle wings. They turned battle, in fields, before the kings of men.

“ But, Trenmor, they returned not from battle. He drew forward that troubled war ; in its dark skirt was Trathal, like a rising light. It was dark ; and Loda’s son poured forth his signs, on night. The feeble were not before thee, son of other lands* ! Then rose the strife of kings, about the hill of night ; but it was soft as two summer gales, shaking their light wings, on a lake. Trenmor yielded to his son ; for the fame of the king had been heard. Trathal came forth before his father, and the foes failed, in echoing Caracha. The years that are past, my son, are marked with mighty deeds†.”

In clouds rose the eastern light. The foe came forth in arms. The strife is mixed on Rath-col, like the roar of streams. Behold the contending of kings ! They meet beside the oak. In gleams of steel the dark forms are lost : such is the meeting of meteors, in a vale by night : red light is scattered round, and men foresee the storm ! Duth-carmor is low in blood ! The son of Ossian overcame ! Not harmless in battle was he, Malvina hand of harps !

Nor, in the field, were the steps of Cathlin. The stranger stood by a secret stream, where the foam of Rath-col skirted the mossy stones. Above, bends the branchy birch, and strews its leaves, on wind. The inverted spear of Cathlin touched,

* Trenmor and Trathal. Ossian introduces this episode as an example to his son, from ancient times.

† Those who deliver down this poem in tradition, lament that there is a great part of it lost. In particular they regret the loss of an episode, which is here introduced, with the sequel of the story of Carmal and his Druids. Their attachment to it was founded on the descriptions of magical incantments which it contained.

touched, at times, the stream. Oscar brought Duth-Carmor's mail: his helmet with its eagle wing. He placed them before the stranger, and his words were heard. "The foes of thy father have failed. They are laid in the field of ghosts. Renown returns to Morven, like a rising wind. Why art thou dark, chief of Clutha? Is there cause for grief?"

"Son of Ossian of harps, my soul is darkly sad. I behold the arms of Cathmol, which he raised in war. Take the mail of Cathlin, place it high in Selma's hall; that thou mayst remember the hapless in thy distant land." From white breasts descended the mail. It was the race of kings; the soft-handed daughter of Cathmol, at the streams of Clutha! Duth-carmor saw her bright in the hall, he had come, by night, to Clutha. Cathmol met him, in battle, but the hero fell. Three days dwelt the foe, with the maid. On the fourth she fled in arms. She remembered the race of kings, and felt her bursting soul.

Why, maid of Toscar of Lutha, should I tell how Cathlin failed? Her tomb is at rushy Lumon, in a distant land. Near it were the steps of Sul-malla, in the days of grief. She raised the song, for the daughter of strangers, and touched the mournful harp.

Come, from the watching of night, Malvina, lonely beam!

SUL-MALLA OF LUMON:

A

P O E M.

ARGUMENT.

This poem, which, properly speaking, is a continuation of the last, opens with an address to Sul-malla, the daughter of the king of Inis-huna, whom Ossian met, at the chace, as he returned from the battle of Rath-col. Sul-malla invites Ossian and Oscar to a feast, at the residence of her father, who was then absent in the wars. Upon hearing their name and family, she relates an expedition of Fingal into Inis-huna. She casually mentioning Cathmor, chief of Atha, (who then assisted her father against his enemies), Ossian introduces the episode of Culgorm and Suran-dronlo, two Scandinavian kings, in whose wars Ossian himself and Cathmor were engaged on opposite sides. The story is imperfect, a part of the original being lost. Ossian, warned in a dream by the ghost of Trenmor, sets sail from Inis-huna.

SUL-MALLA OF LUMON:

A

POEM.

* **W**HO moves so stately, on Lumon, at the
roar of the foamy waters? Her hair falls upon
her heaving breast. White is her arm behind,
as slow she bends the bow. Why dost thou wan-
der in deserts, like a light through a cloudy field?
The young roes are panting, by their secret rocks.
Return, thou daughter of kings! the cloudy
night is near! It was the young branch of green
Inis-huna, Sul-malla of blue eyes. She sent the
VOL. I. N bard

* The expedition of Ossian to Inis-huna happened a short time before Fingal passed over into Ireland, to dethrone Cair-bar the son of Borbar-duthul. Cathmor, the brother of Cair-bar, was aiding Connor, king of Inis-huna, in his wars, at the time that Ossian defeated Duth-carmor, in the valley of Rath-col. The poem is more interesting, that it contains so many particulars concerning those personages who make so great a figure in Temora.

The exact correspondence in the manners and customs of Inis-huna, as here described, to those of Caledonia, leaves no room to doubt that the inhabitants of both were originally the same people. Some may alledge, that Ossian might transfer, in his poetical descriptions, the manners of his own nation to foreigners. This objection is easily answered. Why has he not done this with regard to the inhabitants of Scandinavia? We find the latter very different in their customs and superstitions from the nations of Britain and Ireland. The Scandinavian manners are remarkably barbarous and fierce, and seem to mark out a nation much less advanced in a state of civilization than the inhabitants of Britain were in the times of Ossian.

bard from her rock, to bid us to her feast. Amidst the song we sat down, in Cluba's echoing hall. White moved the hands of Sul-malla, on the trembling strings. Half heard amidst the sound, was the name of Atha's king: He that was absent in battle for her own green land. Nor absent from her soul was he; he came amidst her thoughts by night. Ton-thena looked in, from the sky, and saw her tossing arms.

The sound of shells had ceased. Amidst long locks, Sul-malla rose. She spoke with bended eyes, and asked of our course through seas; "for of the kings of men are ye, tall riders of the wave*." "Not unknown," I said, "at his streams is he, the father of our race. Fingal has been heard of at Cluba, blue-eyed daughter of kings. Nor only, at Cona's stream, is Ossian and Oscar known. Foes trembled at our voice, and shrunk in other lands."

"Not unmarked," said the maid, "by Sul-malla, is the shield of Morven's king. It hangs high, in my father's hall, in memory of the past; when

* Sul-malla here discovers the quality of Ossian and Oscar, from their stature and stately gait. Among nations, not far advanced in civilization, a superior beauty and stateliness of person were inseparable from nobility of blood. It was from these qualities, that those of family were known by strangers, not from tawdry trappings of state injudiciously thrown round them. The cause of this distinguishing property must, in some measure, be ascribed to their unmixed blood. They had no inducement to intermarry with the vulgar; and no low notions of interest made them deviate from their choice, in their own sphere. In states, where luxury has been long established, beauty of person is, by no means, the characteristic of antiquity of family. This must be attributed to those enervating vices which are inseparable from luxury and wealth. A great family (to alter a little the words of the historian), it is true, like a river, becomes considerable from the length of its course, but, as it rolls on, hereditary distempers, as well as property, flow successively into it.

when Fingal came to Cluba, in the days of other years. Loud roared the boar of Culdarnu, in the midst of his rocks and woods. Inis-huna sent her youths, but they failed: and virgins wept over tombs. Careless went Fingal to Culdarnu. On his spear rolled the strength of the woods. He was bright, they said, in his locks, the first of mortal men. Nor at the feast were heard his words. His deeds passed from his soul of fire, like the rolling of vapours from the face of the wandering sun. Not careless looked the blue eyes of Cluba on his stately steps. In white bosoms rose the king of Selma, in the midst of their thoughts by night. But the winds bore the stranger to the echoing vales of his roes. Nor lost to other lands was he, like a meteor that sinks in a cloud. He came forth, at times, in his brightness, to the distant dwelling of foes. His fame came, like the sound of winds, to Cluba's woody vale *."

"Darkness dwells in Cluba of harps: the race of kings is distant far; in battle is my father

N 2

Conmor:

* Too partial to our own times, we are ready to mark out remote antiquity as the region of ignorance and barbarism. This, perhaps, is extending our prejudices too far. It has been long remarked, that knowledge, in a great measure, is founded on a free intercourse between mankind; and that the mind is enlarged in proportion to the observations it has made upon the manners of different men and nations. If we look, with attention, into the history of Fingal, as delivered by Ossian, we shall find that he was not altogether a poor ignorant hunter, confined to the narrow corner of an island. His expeditions to all parts of Scandinavia, to the north of Germany, and the different states of Great Britain and Ireland, were very numerous, and performed under such a character, and at such times, as gave him an opportunity to mark the undisguised manners of mankind. War and an active life, as they call forth, by turns, all the powers of the soul, present to us the different characters of men: in times of peace

Conmor : and Lormar * my brother, king of streams. Nor darkening alone are they ; a beam from other lands, is nigh ; the friend of strangers † in Atha, the troubler of the field. High, from their misty hills, look forth the blue eyes of Erin ; for he is far away, young dweller of their souls ! Nor, harmless, white hands of Erin ! is Cathmor in the skirts of war ; he rolls ten thousand before him, in his distant field."

" Not unseen by Ossian," I said, " rushed Cathmor from his streams, when he poured his strength on I-thorno ‡, isle of many waves ! In strife met two kings in I-thorno, Culgorm and Suran-dronlo : each from his echoing isle, stern hunters of the boar !"

" They met a boar, at a foamy stream : each pierced him with his spear. They strove for the same

peace and quiet, for want of objects to exert them, the powers of the mind lie concealed, in a great measure, and we see only artificial passions and manners. It is from this consideration I conclude, that a traveller of penetration could gather more genuine knowledge from a tour of ancient Gaul, than from the minutest observation of all the artificial manners and elegant refinements of modern France.

* Lormar was the son of Conmor, and the brother of Sul-malla. After the death of Conmor, Lormar succeeded him in the throne.

† Cathmor, the son of Borbar-duthul. It would appear, from the partiality with which Sul-malla speaks of that hero, that she had seen him, previous to his joining her father's army ; tho' tradition positively asserts, that it was after his return that she fell in love with him.

‡ I-thorno, says tradition, was an island of Scandinavia. In it, at a hunting party, met Culgorm and Suran-dronlo, the kings of two neighbouring isles. They differed about the honour of killing a boar ; and a war was kindled between them. From this episode we may learn, that the manners of the Scandinavians were much more savage and cruel than those of Britain. It is remarkable, that the names introduced in this story are not of Galic original, which circumstance affords room to suppose that it had its foundation in true history.

fame of the deed ; and gloomy battle rose. From
 isle to isle they sent a spear, broken and stained
 with blood, to call the friends of their fathers,
 in their sounding arms. Cathmor came, from
 Erin, to Culgorm, red-eyed king : I aided Su-
 ran-dronlo, in his land of boars."

" We rushed on either side of a stream, which
 roared thro' a blasted heath. High broken rocks
 were round, with all their bending trees. Near
 were two circles of Loda, with the stone of
 power ; where spirits descended, by night, in
 dark-red streams of fire. There, mixed with
 the murmur of waters, rose the voice of aged
 men, they called the forms of night, to aid
 them in their war."

" * Heedless I stood, with my people, where
 fell the foamy stream from rocks. The moon
 moved red from the mountain. My song, at
 times arose. Dark, on the other side, young
 Cathmor heard my voice ; for he lay, beneath
 the oak, in all his gleaming arms. Morning
 came ; we rushed to fight : from wing to wing
 is the rolling of strife. They fell, like the
 thistle's head, beneath autumnal winds."

" In armour came a stately form : I mixed my
 strokes with the chief. By turns our shields
 are pierced : loud rung our steely mails. His
 helmet fell to the ground In brightness shone
 the foe. His eyes, two pleasant flames, rolled
 between his wandering locks. I knew Cathmor

N 3

of

* From the circumstance of Ossian not being present at
 the rites, described in the preceding paragraph, we may sup-
 pose that he held them in contempt. This difference of
 sentiment, with regard to religion, is a sort of argument,
 that the Caledonians were not originally a colony of Scan-
 dinavians, as some have imagined. Concerning so remote a
 period, mere conjecture must supply the place of argument
 and positive proofs.

of Altha, and threw my spear on earth. Dark, we turned, and silent passed to mix with other foes."

Not so passed the striving kings *. They mixed in echoing fray: like the meeting of ghosts, in the dark wing of winds. Through either breast rushed the spears; nor yet lay the foes on earth! A rock received their fall; half-reclined they lay in death. Each held the lock of his foe; each grimly seemed to roll his eyes. The stream of the rock leapt on their shields, and mixed below with blood.

"The battle ceased in I-thorno. The strangers met in peace: Cathmor from Atha of streams, and Ossian, king of harps. We placed the dead in earth. Our steps were by Runar's bay. With the bounding boat, afar, advanced a ridgy wave. Dark was the rider of seas, but a beam of light was there, like the ray of the sun, in Stromlo's rolling sloop. It was the daughter † of Suran-dronlo, wild in brightened looks.
Her

* Culgorm and Suran-dronlo. The combat of the kings and their attitude in death are highly picturesque, and expressive of that ferocity of manners which distinguished the northern nations.

† Tradition has handed down the name of this princess. The bards call her Runo-forlo, which has no other sort of title for being genuine, but its not being of Galic original; a distinction which the bards had not the art to preserve, when they feigned names for foreigners. The highland senachies, who very often endeavoured to supply the deficiency they thought they found in the tales of Ossian, have given us the continuation of the story of the daughter of Suran-dronlo. The catastrophe is so unnatural, and the circumstances of it so ridiculously pompous, that, for the sake of the inventors, I shall conceal them.

The wildly beautiful appearance of Runo-forlo made a deep impression on a chief, some ages ago, who was himself no contemptible poet. The story is romantic, but not incredible.

Her eyes were wandering flames, amidst disorder'd locks Forward is her white arm, with the spear; her high-heaving breast is seen, white as foamy waves that rise, by turns, amidst rocks. They are beautiful, but terrible, and mariners call the winds!"

"Come, ye dwellers of Loda!" she said, "come, Carchar, pale in the midst of clouds! Sluthmor, that stridest in airy halls! Corchtur, terrible in winds! Receive, from his daughter's spear, the foes of Suran-dronlo. No shadow, at his roaring streams; no mildly-looking form was he! When he took up his spear, the hawks shook their sounding wings: for blood was poured around the steps of dark-eyed Suran-dronlo. He lighted me, no harmless beam, to glitter on his streams. Like meteors, I was bright, but I blasted the foes of Suran-dronlo."

* * * * *

Nor unconcerned heard Sul-malla, the praise of Cathmor of shields. He was within her soul, like a fire in secret heath, which awakes at the

N 4

voice

dible, if we make allowances for the lively imagination of a man of genius. Our chief sailing, in a storm, along one of the islands of Orkney, saw a woman, in a boat, near the shore, whom he thought, as he expresses it himself, *as beautiful as a sudden ray of the sun, on the dark-heaving deep*. The verses of Ossian, on the attitude of Runo-forlo, which was so similar to that of the woman in the boat, wrought so much on his fancy, that he fell desperately in love. The winds, however, drove him from the coast, and, after a few days, he arrived at his residence in Scotland. There his passion increased to such a degree, that two of his friends, fearing the consequence, sailed to the Orkneys, to carry to him the object of his desire. Upon inquiry they soon found the nymph, and carried her to the enamoured chief; but mark his surprize, when, instead of a ray of the sun, he saw a skinny fisherwoman, more than middle-aged, appearing before him. Tradition here ends the story: but it may be easily supposed that the passion of the chief soon subsided.

voice of the blast, and sends its beam abroad. Amidst the song removed the daughter of kings, like the voice of a summer-breeze; when it lifts the heads of flowers, and curls the lakes and streams. The rustling sound gently spreads o'er the vale, softly-pleasing as it saddens the soul.

By night came a dream to Ossian; formless stood the shadow of Trenmor. He seemed to strike the dim shield, on Selma's streamy rock. I rose, in my rattling steel; I knew that war was near; before the winds our sails were spread, when Lumon showed its streams to the morn.

Come from the watching of night, Malvina, lonely beam!

CATH-LODA:

A

P O E M.



DUAN FIRST

N 5

ARGUMENT.

FINGAL, when very young, making a voyage to the Orkney islands, was driven, by stress of weather, into a bay of Scandinavia, near the residence of Starno, king of Lochlin. Starno invites Fingal to a feast. Fingal, doubting the faith of the king, and mindful of a former breach of hospitality, refuses to go.—Starno gathers together his tribes : Fingal resolves to defend himself.—Night coming on, Duthmaruno proposes to Fingal to observe the motions of the enemy.—The king himself undertakes the watch. Advancing towards the enemy, he, accidentally, comes to the cave of Turthor, where Starno had confined Conban-carglas, the captive daughter of a neighbouring chief.—Her story is imperfect, a part of the original being lost.—Fingal comes to a place of worship, where Starno and his son, Swaran, consulted the spirit of Loda, concerning the issue of the war.—The rencounter of Fingal and Swaran.—*Duan* first concludes with a description of the airy hall of Cruth-loda, supposed to be the Odin of Scandinavia.

CATH-LODA:

DUAN * FIRST.

A TALE of the times of old !

Why, thou wanderer unseen ! Thou bender
of the thistle of Lora ; why, thou breeze of the
valley, hast thou left mine ear ? I hear no distant
roar of streams ! No sound of the harp, from the
rock ! Come thou huntress of Lutha, Malvina,
call back his soul to the bard. I look forward to

N 6

Lochlin

* The bards distinguished those compositions, in which the narration is often interrupted, by episodes and apostrophes, by the name of *Duan*. Since the extinct order of the bards, it has been a general name for all ancient compositions in verse. The abrupt manner in which the story of this poem begins may render it obscure to some readers ; it may not therefore be improper to give here the traditional preface, which is generally prefixed to it. Two years after he took to wife Ros-crana, the daughter of Cormac, king of Ireland, Fingal undertook an expedition into Orkney, to visit his friend Cathulla, king of Inistore. After staying a few days at Cariethura, the residence of Cathulla, the king set sail, to return to Scotland ; but, a violent storm arising, his ships were driven into a bay of Scandinavia, near Gormal, the seat of Starno, king of Lochlin, his avowed enemy. Starno, upon the appearance of strangers on his coast, summoned together the neighbouring tribes, and advanced in a hostile manner, towards the bay of U-thorno, where Fingal had taken shelter. Upon discovering who the strangers were, and fearing the valour of Fingal, which he had more than once experienced before, he resolved to accomplish by treachery, what he was afraid he should fail in by open force. He invited, therefore, Fingal to a feast, at which he intended to assassinate him. The king prudently declined to go, and Starno betook himself to arms. The sequel of the story may be learned from the poem itself.

Lochlin of lakes, to the dark, billowy bay of Uthorno, where Fingal descends from Ocean, from the roar of winds. Few are the heroes of Morven, in a land unknown !

Starno sent a dweller of Loda, to bid Fingal to the feast ; but the king remembered the past, and all his rage arose. “ Nor Gormal’s mossy towers, nor Starno, shall Fingal behold. Deaths wander, like shadows, over his fiery soul ! Do I forget that beam of light, the whitehanded daughter * of kings ? Go, son of Loda ; his words are wind to Fingal : wind, that, to and fro, drives the thistle, in autumn’s dusky vale. Duth-maruno †, arm of death ! Cromma-glas, of iron shields ! Struthmor, dweller of battles wing ! Cormar, whose ships bound on seas, careless as the course of a meteor, on dark-rolling-clouds ! Arise around me, children of heroes, in a land unknown ! Let each look on his shield, like Trenmor, the ruler of wars. Come down, thus Trenmor said, thou dweller between the harps !
Thou

* Agandecca, the daughter of Starno, whom her father killed, on account of her discovering to Fingal a plot laid against his life. Her story is related at large in the third book of Fingal.

† Duth-maruno is a name very famous in tradition. Many of his great actions are handed down, but the poems, which contained the detail of them, are long since lost. He lived, it is supposed, in that part of the north of Scotland which is over against Orkney. Duth-maruno, Cromma-glas, Struthmor, and Cormar, are mentioned, as attending Comhal in his last battle against the tribe of Morni, in a poem, which is still preserved. It is not the work of Ossian; the phraseology betrays it to be a modern composition. It is something like those trivial compositions, which the Irish bards forged, under the name of Ossian, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Duth-maruno signifies, *black and steady*; Cromma-glas, *bending and swartby*; Struthmor, *roaring stream*; Cormar, *expert of sea*.

Thou shalt roll this stream away, or waste with me in earth."

Around the king they rise in wrath. No words come forth: they seize their spears. Each soul is rolled into itself. At length the sudden clang is waked, on all their echoing shields. Each takes his hill, by night; at intervals, they darkly stand. Unequal bursts the hum of songs, between the roaring wind!

Broad over them rose the moon!

In his arms, came tall Duth-maruno; he from Croma of rocks, stern hunter of the boar! In his dark boat he rose on waves, when Crumthormo * awaked its woods. In the chace he shone, among foes: No fear was thine, Duth-maruno!

"Son of daring Comhal, shall my steps be forward through night? From this shield shall I view them, over their gleaming tribes? Starno, king of lakes is before me, and Swaran, the foe of strangers. Their words are not in vain, by Loda's stone of power.—Should Duth-maruno not return, his spouse is lonely, at home, where meet two roaring streams, on Crathmo-craulo's plain. Around are hills, with echoing woods; the ocean is rolling near. My son looks on screaming sea-fowl, a young wanderer on the field. Give the head of a boar to Can-dona †, tell him of his father's joy, when the bristly strength of I-thorno rolled on his lifted spear. Tell him of my deeds in war! Tell where his father fell!"

"Not

* Crumthormoth, one of the Orkney or Shetland islands. The name is not of Galic original. It was subject to its own petty king, who is mentioned in one of Ossian's poems.

† Cean-daono, *head of the people*, the son of Duth-maruno. He became afterwards famous, in the expeditions of Ossian, after the death of Fingal. The traditional tales concerning him are very numerous, and, from the epithet, in them, bestowed

“ Not forgetful of my fathers” said Fingal,
 “ I have bounded over the seas. Theirs were
 the times of danger, in the days of old. Nor
 settles darkness on me, before foes, tho’ youthful
 in my locks. Chief of Crathmo-craulo, the field
 of night is mine.”

Fingal rushed, in all his arms, wide-bounding
 over Turthor’s stream, that sent its fullen roar,
 by

on him (*Candona of boars*) it would appear, that he applied himself to that kind of hunting, which his father, in this paragraph, is so anxious to recommend to him. As I have mentioned the traditional tales of the Highlands, it may not be improper here to give some account of them. After the expulsion of the bards from the houses of the chiefs, they being an indolent race of men, owed all their subsistence to the generosity of the vulgar, whom they diverted with repeating the compositions of their predecessors, and running up the genealogies of their entertainers to the family of their chiefs. As this subject was, however, soon exhausted, they were obliged to have recourse to invention, and form stories having no foundation in fact, which were swallowed, with great credulity, by an ignorant multitude. By frequent repeating, the fable grew upon their hands, and, as each threw in whatever circumstance he thought conducive to raise the admiration of his hearers, the story became, at last, so devoid of all probability, that even the vulgar themselves did not believe it. They, however, liked the tales so well, that the bards found their advantage in turning professed tale-makers. They then launched out into the wildest regions of fiction and romance. I firmly believe, there are more stories of giants, enchanted castles, dwarfs, and palfreys, in the Highlands, than in any country in Europe. These tales, it is certain, like other romantic compositions, have many things in them unnatural, and consequently, disgusting to true taste, but I know not how it happens, they command attention more than any other fictions I ever met with. The extreme length of these pieces is very surprising, some of them requiring many days to repeat them; but such hold the take of the memory, that few circumstances are ever omitted by those who have received them only from oral tradition: What is still more amazing, the very language of the bards is still preserved. It is curious to see, that the descriptions of magnificence, introduced in these tales, is even superior to all the pompous oriental fictions of the kind.

by night, thro' Gormal's misty vale. A moon-beam glittered on a rock; in the midst, stood a stately form; a form with floating locks, like Lochlin's white-bosomed maids. Unequal are her steps, and short. She throws a broken song on wind. At times she tosses her white arms: for grief is dwelling in her soul.

"Torcul-torno*, of aged locks!" she said, "where now are thy steps, by Lulan? Thou hast failed, at thine own dark streams, father of Conban-cârgla! But I behold thee, chief of Lulan, sporting by Loda's hall, when the dark-skirted night is rolled along the sky.—Thou sometimes hidest the moon with thy shield. I have seen her dim, in heaven. Thou kindlest thy hair into meteors, and failest along the night. Why am I forgot, in my cave, king of shaggy boars? Look, from the hall of Loda, on thy lonely daughter."

"Who art thou," said Fingal, "voice of night?"

She, trembling turned away.

"Who art thou, in thy darkness?"

She shrunk into the cave.

The king loosed the thong from her hands.—
He asked about her fathers.

"Torcul-

* Torcul-torno, according to tradition, was king of Cruth-lun, a district in Sweden. The river Lulan ran near the residence of Torcul-torno. There is a river in Sweden, still called Lula, which is probably the same with Lulan. The war between Starno and Torcul-torno, which terminated in the death of the latter, had its rise at a hunting party. Starno being invited, in a friendly manner, by Torcul-torno, both kings, with their followers, went to the mountains of Stivamore to hunt. A boar rushed from the wood before the kings, and Torcul-torno killed it. Starno thought this behaviour a breach upon the privilege of guests, who were always *honoured*, as tradition expresses it, *with the danger*

“Torcul-torno,” she said, “once dwelt at Lulan’s foamy stream: he dwelt—but, now, in Loda’s hall, he shakes the founding shell. He met Starno of Lochlin, in war; long fought the dark-eyed kings. My father fell, in his blood, blue-shielded Torcul-torno! By a rock, at Lulan’s stream, I had peirc’d the bounding roe. My white hand gathered my hair from off the rushing winds. I heard a noise. Mine eyes were up. My soft breast rose on high. My step was forward, at Lulan, to meet thee, Torcul-torno! It was Starno, dreadful king! His red eyes rolled on me in love. Dark wav’d his shaggy brow, above his gather’d smile. Where is my father; I said, he that was mighty in war? Thou art left alone among foes, O daughter of Torcul-torno! He took my hand. He raised the sail. In this cave he placed me dark. At times, he comes, a gathered mist. He lifts, before me, my father’s shield. But often passes a beam * of youth, far distant from my cave. The son of Starno moves in my sight. He dwells lonely in my foul.”

“Maid of Lulan,” said Fingal, “white-handed daughter of grief! a cloud, marked with streaks
of

of the chase. A quarrel arose, the kings came to battle, with all their attendants, and the party of Torcul-torno were totally defeated, and he himself slain. Starno pursued his victory, laid waste the district of Crathlun, and, coming to the residence of Torcul-torno, carried off, by force, Conbancarglas, the beautiful daughter of his enemy. Her he confined in a cave, near the palace of Gormal, where on account of her cruel treatment, she became distracted.

The paragraph just now before us is the song of Conbancarglas, at the time she was discovered by Fingal. It is in Lyric measure, and set to music, which is wild and simple, and so inimitably suited to the situation of the unhappy lady, that few can hear it without tears.

* By *the beam of youth*, it afterwards appears, that Conbancarglas means Swaran, the son of Starno, with whom, during her confinement, she had fallen in love.

of fire, is rolled along thy soul. Look not to that dark-robed moon; look not to those meteors of heaven. My gleaming steel is around thee, the terror of thy foes! It is not the steel of the feeble, nor of the dark in soul! The maids are not shut in our * caves of streams. They toss not their white arms alone. They bend, fair within their locks, above the harps of Selma. Their voice is not in the desert wild. We melt along the pleasing sound!

* * * * *

Fingal, again, advanced his steps, wide through the bosom of night, to where the trees of Loda shook amid squally winds. Three stones, with heads of moss, are there; a stream, with foaming course: and dreadful, rolled around them, is the dark-red cloud of Loda. High from its top looked forward a ghost, half-formed of the shadowy smoak. He poured his voice, at times, amidst the roaring stream. Near, bending beneath a blasted tree, two heroes received his words: Swaran of lakes, and Starno foe of strangers. On their dun shields, they darkly leaned: their spears are forward through night. Shrill sounds the blast of darkness, in Starno's floating beard.

They heard the tread of Fingal. The warriors rose in arms. "Swaran, lay that wanderer low," said Starno in his pride. "Take the shield of thy father. It is a rock in war."—Swaran threw his gleaming spear. It stood fixed in

* From this contrast which Fingal draws between his own nation and the inhabitants of Scandinavia, we may learn that the former were much less barbarous than the latter. This distinction is so much observed throughout the poems of Ossian, that there can be no doubt that he followed the real manners of both nations in his own time. At the close of the speech of Fingal, there is a great part of the original.

in Loda's tree. Then came the foes forward, with swords. They mixed their rattling steel. Through the thongs of Swaran's shield rushed the blade * of Luno. The shield fell rolling on earth. Cleft the helmet † fell down. Fingal stooped the lifted steel. Wrathful stood Swaran, unarmed. He rolled his silent eyes; he threw his sword on earth. Then, slowly stalking over the stream, he whistled as he went.

Nor unseen of his father is Swaran. Starno turns away in wrath. His shaggy brows wave dark, above his gathered rage. He strikes Loda's tree, with his spear. He raises the hum of songs. They come to the host of Lochlin, each in his own dark path; like two foam-covered streams, from two rainy vales!

To Turthor's plain Fingal returned. Fair rose the beam of the east. It shone on the spoils of Lochlin in the hand of the king. From her cave came forth, in her beauty, the daughter of Torcul-torno. She gathered her hair from wind. She wildly raised her song. The song of Lulan of shells, where once her father dwelt. She saw Starno's bloody shield. Gladness rose, a light, on her face. She saw the cleft helmet of Swaran ‡. She shrunk, darkened, from Fingal.—

“ Art

* The sword of Fingal, so called from its maker, Luno of Lochlin.

† The helmet of Swaran. The behaviour of Fingal is always consistent with that generosity of spirit which belongs to a hero. He takes no advantage of a foe disarmed.

‡ Conban-carglas, from seeing the helmet of Swaran bloody in the hands of Fingal, conjectured that that hero was killed. A part of the original is lost. It appears, however, from the sequel of the poem, that the daughter of Torcul-torno did not long survive her surprise occasioned by the supposed death of her lover. The description of the airy hall of Loda (which is supposed to be the same with that of Odin, the deity of Scandinavia) is more picturesque and descriptive than any in the Edda, or other works of the northern Scalds.

“ Art thou fallen, by thy hundred streams, O love of the mournful maid ?”

U-thorno, that risest in waters! on whose side are the meteors of night! I behold the dark moon descending, behind thy resounding woods. On thy top dwells the misty Loda: the house of the spirits of men! In the end of his cloudy hall, bends forward Cruth-loda of swords. His form is dimly seen, amid his wavy mist. His right-hand is on his shield. In his left is the half-viewless shell. The roof of his dreadful hall is marked with nightly fires!

The race of Cruth-loda advance, a ridge of formless shades. He reaches the sounding shell, to those who shone in war. But, between him and the feeble, his shield rises, a darkened orb. He is a setting meteor to the weak in arms. Bright, as a rainbow on streams, came Lulan's white-bosomed maid.



CATH-LODA:

A

P O E M.

DUAN SECOND.

ARGUMENT.

FINGAL returning with day, devolves the command on Duth-maruno, who engages the enemy, and drives them over the stream of Turthor. Having recalled his people, he congratulates Duth-maruno on his success, but discovers that that hero had been mortally wounded in the action. Duth-maruno dies. Ullin the bard, in honour of the dead, introduces the episode of Colgorm and Strina-dona, which concludes this *duan*.

CATH-LODA.

DUAN SECOND.

“**W**HERE art thou, son of the king?” said dark-haired Duth-maruno. Where hast thou failed, young beam of Selma? He returns not, from the bosom of night! Morning is spread on U-thorno. In his mist is the sun, on his hill. Warriors, lift the shields, in my presence. He must not fall, like a fire from heaven, whose place is not marked on the ground. He comes, like an eagle, from the skirt of his squally wind! In his hand are the spoils of foes. King of Selma, our souls were sad!”

“Near us are the foes, Duth-maruno. They come forward, like waves in mist, when their foamy tops are seen, at times, above the low-falling vapour. The traveller shrinks on his journey; he knows not whither to fly. No trembling travellers are we! Sons of heroes call forth the steel. Shall the sword of Fingal arise, or shall a warrior lead?”

* The deeds of old, said Duth-maruno, are like paths to our eyes, O Fingal! Broad-shielded Tremor is still seen, amidst his own dim years. Nor feeble

* In this short episode we have a very probable account given us of the origin of monarchy in Caledonia. The *Caël*, or Gauls, who possessed the countries to the north of the Frith of Edinburgh, were originally a number of distinct tribes or clans, each subject to its own chief who was free and independent of any other power. When the Romans invaded

feeble was the soul of the king. There, no dark deed wandered in secret. From their hundred streams came the tribes, to grassy Colglancrona. Their chiefs were before them. Each strove to lead the war. Their swords were often half-un-sheathed. Red rolled their eyes of rage. Separate they stood, and hummed their surly songs. "Why should they yield to each other? their fathers were equal in war." Trenmor was there, with his people, stately in youthful locks. He saw the advancing foe. The grief of his soul arose. He bade the chiefs to lead, by turns: they led, but they were rolled away. From his own mossy hill, blue-shielded Trenmor came down. He led wide-skirted battle, and the strangers failed. Around him the dark-browed warriors came: they struck the shield of joy. Like a pleasant gale, the words of power rushed forth from Selma of kings. But the chiefs led, by turns, in war, till mighty danger rose: then was the hour of the king to conquer in the field.

"Not

invaded them, the common danger might, perhaps, have induced those *reguli* to join together; but, as they were unwilling to yield to the command of one of their own number, their battles were ill-conducted, and consequently unsuccessful. Trenmor was the first who represented to the chiefs the bad consequences of carrying on their wars in this irregular manner, and advised that they themselves should alternately lead in battle. They did so, but they were unsuccessful. When it came to Trenmor's turn, he totally defeated the enemy by his superior valour and conduct, which gained him such an interest among the tribes, that he, and his family after him, were regarded as kings; or, to use the poet's expression, *the words of power rushed forth from Selma of kings*. The regal authority, however, except in time of war, was but inconsiderable; for every chief, within his own district, was absolute and independent. From the scene of the battle in this episode (which was in the valley of Crona, a little to the north of Agricola's wall) I should suppose, that the enemies of the Caledonians were the Romans or provincial Britons.

“ Not unknown,” said Cromma-glass * of shields, “ are the deeds of our fathers. But who shall now lead the war, before the race of kings ? Mist settles on these four dark hills : within it let each warrior strike his shield. Spirits may descend in darkness, and mark us for the war.”

They went, each to his hill of mist. Bards marked the sounds of the shields. Loudest rung thy boss, Duth-maruno. Thou must lead in war !

Like the murmur of waters, the race of Uthorno came down. Starno led the battle, and Swaran of stormy isles. They looked forward from iron shields, like Croht-loda fiery-eyed, when he looks from behind the darkened moon, and strews his signs on night. The foes met by Turthor's stream. They heaved like ridgy waves.

VOL. I.

O

Their

* In tradition, this Cromma-glass makes a great figure in that battle which Comhal lost, together with his life, to the tribe of Morni. I have just now, in my hands, an Irish composition, of a very modern date, as appears from the language, in which all the traditions concerning that decisive engagement are jumbled together. In justice to the merit of the poem, I should have here presented to the reader a translation of it, did not the bard mention some circumstances very ridiculous, and others altogether indecent. Morna, the wife of Comhal, had a principal hand in all the transactions previous to the defeat and death of her husband; she, to use the words of the bard, *who was the guiding star of the women of Erin*. The bard, it is to be hoped, misrepresented the ladies of his country, for Morna's behaviour was, according to him, so void of all decency and virtue, that it cannot be supposed they had chosen her for their *guiding star*. The poem consists of many stanzas. The language is figurative, and the numbers harmonious : but the piece is so full of anachronisms, and so unequal in its composition, that the author, most undoubtedly, was either mad, or drunk, when he wrote it. It is worthy of being remarked, that Comhal is, in this poem, very often called, *Comhal, na b' Albin*, or *Comhal of Albion*, which sufficiently demonstrates that the allegations of Keating and O'Flaherty, concerning *Fion Mac-Comhal*, are but of late invention.

Their echoing strokes are mixed. Shadowy death flies over the hosts. They were clouds of hail, with squally winds in their skirts. Their showers are roaring together. Below them swells the dark-rolling deep.

Strife of gloomy U-thorno, why should I mark thy wounds! Thou art with the years that are gone; thou fadeest on my soul!

Starno brought forward his skirt of war, and Swaran his own dark wing. Nor a harmless fire is Duth-maruno's sword. Lochlin is rolled over her streams. The wrathful kings are lost in thought. They roll their silent eyes, over the flight of their land. The horn of Fingal was heard; the sons of woody Albion returned. But many lay, by Turthor's stream, silent in their blood.

"Chief of Crathmo," said the king, "Duth-maruno, hunter of boars! not harmless returns my eagle from the field of foes! For this white-bosomed Lanul shall brighten at her streams; Candona shall rejoice, as he wanders in Crathmo's fields."

"Colgorm*," replied the chief, "was the first of my race in Albion; Colgorm, the rider of ocean, through its watery vales. He slew his brother

* The family of Duth-maruno, it appears, came originally from Scandinavia, or, at least, from some of the northern isles, subject, in chief, to the kings of Lochlin. The Highland fenachies, who never missed to make their comments on, and additions to, the works of Ossian, have given us a long list of the ancestors of Duth-maruno, and a particular account of their actions, many of which are of the marvellous kind. One of the tale-makers of the north has chosen for his hero Starnmor, the father of Duth-maruno, and, considering the adventures through which he has led him, the piece is neither disagreeable, nor abounding with that kind of fiction which shocks credibility.

ther in I-thorno*: He left the land of his fathers. He chose his place, in silence, by rocky Crathmo-craulo. His race came forth in their years; they came forth to war, but they always fell. The wound of my father's is mine, king of echoing isles!

“ He drew an arrow from his side! He fell pale, in a land unknown. His soul came forth to his fathers, to their stormy isle. There they pursued boars of mist, along the skirts of winds. The chiefs stood silent around, as the stones of Loda, on their hill. The traveller sees them, through the twilight, from his lonely path. He thinks them the ghosts of the aged, forming future wars.

“ Night came down, on U-thorno. Still stood the chiefs in their grief. The blast whistled, by turns, through every warrior’s hair. Fingal, at length, broke forth from the thoughts of his foul. He called Ullin of harps, and bade the song to rife. “ No falling fire, that is only seen, and then retires in night; no departing meteor was he that is laid so low. He was like the strong-beaming sun, long rejoicing on his hill. Call the names of his fathers, from their dwellings old !”

I-thorno †, said the bard, that risest midst ridgy
seas ! Why is thy head so gloomy, in the ocean's
O 2 mist ?

 O_2

gift?

* An island of Scandinavia.

† This episode is, in the original, extremely beautiful. It is set to that wild kind of music which some of the Highlanders distinguish by the title of *Fon Oi-marra*, or the *Song of mermaids*. Some part of the air is absolutely infernal, but there are many returns in the measure which are inexpressibly wild and beautiful. From the genius of the music, I should think it came originally from Scandinavia; for the fictions delivered down concerning the *Oi-marra*, (who are reputed the authors of the music), exactly correspond with the notions of the northern nations concerning their *diræ* or *goddesses of death*.

mist? From thy vales came forth a race, fearless as thy strong-winged eagles; the race of Colgorm of iron shields, dwellers of Loda's hall.

In Tormoth's resounding isle, arose Lurthan, streamy hill. It bent its woody head over a silent vale. There, at foamy Cruruth's source, dwelt Rurmar, hunter of boars! His daughter was fair as a sun-beam, white-bosomed Strina-dona!

Many a king of heroes, and hero of iron shields; many a youth of heavy locks came to Rurmar's echoing hall. They came to woo the maid, the stately huntress of Tormoth wild. But thou lookest careless from thy steps, high-bosomed Strina-dona!

If on the heath she moved, her breast was whiter than the down of Cana*; if on the sea-beat shore, than the foam of the rolling ocean. Her eyes were two stars of light. Her face was heaven's bow in showers. Her dark hair flowed round it, like the streaming clouds. Thou wert the dweller of souls, white-handed Strina-dona!

Colgorm came, in his ship, and Corcul-Suran, king of shells. The brothers came, from I-thor-no, to woo the sun-beam of Tormoth wild. She saw them in their echoing steel. Her soul was fixed on blue-eyed Colgorm. † Ul-lochlin's nightly eye looked in, and saw the tossing arms of Strina-dona.

Wrathful

---Of all the names in this episode, there is none of a Galic original, except Strina-dona, which signifies the *strife of heroes*.

* The *Cana* is a certain kind of grass, which grows plentifully in the heathy morasses of the north. Its stalk is of the reedy kind, and it carries a tuft of down very much resembling cotton. It is excessively white, and consequently often introduced by the bards in their similes concerning the beauty of women.

† Ul-lochlin, *the guide to Lochlin*; the name of a star.

Wrathful the brothers frowned. Their flaming eyes, in silence, met. They turned away. They struck their shields. Their hands were trembling on their swords. They rushed into the strife of heroes, for long-haired Strina-dona.

Corcul-Suran fell in blood. On his isle, raged the strength of his father. He turned Colgorm, from I-thorno, to wander on all the winds. In Crathmo-craulo's rocky field, he dwelt by a foreign stream. Nor darkened the king alone, that beam of light was near, the daughter of echoing Tormoth, white-armed Strina-dona *.

* The continuation of this episode is just now in my hands; but the language is so different from, and the ideas so unworthy of, Ossian, that I have rejected it, as an interpolation by a modern bard.

CATH-LODA.

A.

P O E M.



DUAN THIRD.

ARGUMENT.

Osian, after some general reflections, describes the situation of Fingal, and the position of the army of Lochlin. The conversation of Starno and Swaran. The episode of Corman-trunar and Foinar-bragal. Starno, from his own example, recommends to Swaran to surprise Fingal, who had retired alone to a neighbouring hill. Upon Swaran's refusal, Starno undertakes the enterprize himself, is overcome, and taken prisoner, by Fingal. He is dismissed, after a severe reprimand for his cruelty.

CATH-LODA:

DUAN THIRD.

WHENCE is the stream of years? Whither do they roll along? Where have they hid in mist, their many-coloured sides?

I look into the times of old, but they seem dim to Ossian's eyes, like reflected moon-beams on a distant lake. Here rise the red beams of war! There, silent, dwells a feeble race! They mark no years with their deeds, as slow they pass along. Dweller between the shields! Thou that awakest the failing soul! Descend from thy wall, harp of Cona, with thy voices three! Come with that which kindles the past; rear the forms of old, on their own dark-brown years!

* U-thorno, hill of storms, I behold my race on thy side. Fingal is bending, in night, over Duth-

* The bards, who were always ready to supply what they thought deficient in the poems of Ossian, have inserted a great many incidents between the second and third *duan* of Cath-loda. Their interpolations are so easily distinguished from the genuine remains of Ossian, that it took me very little time to mark them out, and totally to reject them. If the modern Scotch and Irish bards have shewn any judgment, it is in ascribing their own compositions to names of antiquity, for by that means they themselves have escaped that contempt which the authors of such futile performances must necessarily have met with from people of true taste. I was led into this observation by an Irish poem just now before me. It concerns a descent made by Swaran, king of Lochlin, on Ireland, and is the work, says the traditional preface prefixed to it, of *Ossian Mac-Fion*. It however appears, from several pious ejaculations, that it was rather the composition of some good priest, in the fifteenth or sixteenth century, for he speaks, with great devotion, of pilgrimage, and more particularly of the

Duth-maruno's tomb. Near him are the steps of his heroes, hunters of the boar. By Turthor's stream the host of Lochlin is deep in shades. The wrathful kings stood on two hills; they looked forward from their bossy shields. They looked forward to the stars of night, red wandering in the west. Cruth-loda bends from high, like a formless meteor in clouds. He sends abroad the winds, and marks them, with his signs. Starno foresaw, that Morven's king was not to yield in war.

He twice struck the tree in wrath. He rushed before his son. He hummed a furly song; and heard his hair in wind. Turned * from one another, they stood, like two oaks, which different winds had bent; each hangs over its own loud rill, and shakes its boughs in the course of blasts.

“ Annir,”

the blue-eyed daughters of the convent. Religious, however, as this poet was, he was not altogether decent in the scenes he introduces between Swaran and the wife of *Congcullion*, both of whom he represents as giants. It happening, unfortunately, that *Congcullion* was only of a moderate stature, his wife, without hesitation, preferred Swaran, as a more adequate match for her own gigantic size. From this fatal preference proceeded so much mischief, that the good poet altogether lost sight of his principal action, and he ends the piece with advice to men in the choice of their wives; which, however good it may be, I shall leave concealed in the obscurity of the original.

* The furly attitude of Starno and Swaran is well adapted to their fierce and uncomplying dispositions. Their characters, at first sight, seem little different; but, upon examination, we find that the poet has dexterously distinguished between them. They were both dark, stubborn, haughty, and reserved; but Starno was cunning, revengeful, and cruel, to the highest degree; the disposition of Swaran, though savage, was less bloody, and somewhat tinged with generosity. It is doing injustice to Ossian to say that he has not a great variety of characters.

“Annir,” said Starno of lakes, “was a fire that consumed of old. He poured death from his eyes, along the striving fields. His joy was in the fall of men. Blood to him was a summer stream, that brings joy to withered vales, from its own mossy rock. He came forth to the lake Luth-corno, to meet the tall Corman-trunar, he from Urlor of streams, dweller of battle’s wing.”

The chief of Urlor had come to Gormal, with his dark-bosomed ships. He saw the daughter of Annir, white-armed Foina-bragâl. He saw her! Nor careless rolled her eyes, on the rider of stormy waves. She fled to his ship in darkness, like a moon-beam thro’ a nightly vale. Annir pursued along the deep; he called the winds of heaven. Nor alone was the king! Starno was by his side. Like U-thorno’s young eagle, I turned my eyes on my father.

We rushed into roaring Urlor. With his people came tall Corman-trunar. We fought; but the foe prevailed. In his wrath my father stood. He lopped the young trees, with his sword. His eyes rolled red in his rage. I marked the foul of the king, and I retired in night. From the field I took a broken helmet: a shield that was pierced with steel; pointless was the spear in my hand. I went to find the foe.

On a rock fat tall Corman-trunar, beside his burning oak; and near him, beneath a tree, sat deep-bosomed Foina-bragâl. I threw my broken shield before her. I spoke the words of peace. “Beside his rolling sea, lies Annir of many lakes. The king was pierced in battle; and Starno is to raise his tomb. Me, a son of Loda, he sends to white-handed Foina, to bid her send a lock from her hair, to rest with her father, in earth. And thou king of roaring Urlor, let the battle cease,
till

till Annir receive the shell, from fiery-eyed Cruth-loda."

* Bursting into tears, she rose, and tore a lock from her hair; a lock, which wandered in the blast; along her heaving breast. Corman-trunar gave the shell; and bade me to rejoice before him. I rested in the shade of night; and hid my face in my helmet deep. Sleep descended on the foe. I rose like a stalking ghost. I pierced the side of Corman-trunar. Nor did Foina-bragâl escape. She rolled her white bosom in blood.

Why then, daughter of heroes, didst thou wake my rage?

Morning rose. The foe were fled, like the departure of mist. Annir struck his bossy shield. He called his dark-haired son. I came streaked with wandering blood; thrice rose the shout of the king, like the bursting forth of a squall of wind, from a cloud, by night. We rejoiced three days above the dead, and called the hawks of heaven. They came, from all the winds, to feast on Annir's foes. Swaran! Fingal is alone†, on his hill of night. Let thy spear pierce the king in secret; like Annir, my soul shall rejoice.

“ Son

* Ossian is very partial to the fair sex. Even the daughter of the cruel Annir, the sister of the revengeful and bloody Starno, partakes not of those disagreeable characters so peculiar to her family. She is altogether tender and delicate. Homer, of all ancient poets, uses the sex with least ceremony. His cold contempt is even worse than the downright abuse of the moderns; for to draw abuse implies the possession of some merit.

† Fingal, according to the custom of the Caledonian kings, had retired to a hill alone, as he himself was to resume the command of the army the next day. Starno might have some intelligence of the king's retiring, which occasions his request to Swaran, to stab him, as he foresaw, by his art of divination, that he could not overcome him in open battle.

“ Son of Annir,” said Swaran, “ I shall not slay in shades. I move forth in light: the hawks rush from all their winds. They are wont to trace my course: it is not harmless thro’ war.”

Burning rose the rage of the king. He thrice raised his gleaming spear. But, starting, he spared his son; and rushed into the night. By Turthor’s stream a cave is dark, the dwelling of Conban-carglas. There he laid the helmet of kings, and called the maid of Lulan: but she was distant far, in Loda’s resounding hall.

Swelling in his rage, he strode to where Fingal lay alone. The king was laid on his shield, on his own secret hill.

Stern hunter of shaggy boars! no feeble maid is laid before thee. No boy, on his ferny bed, by Turthor’s murmuring stream. Here is spread the couch of the mighty, from which they rise to deeds of death! Hunter of shaggy boars, awaken not the terrible!

Starno came murmuring on: Fingal arose in arms. “ Who art thou, son of night?” Silent he threw the spear. They mixed their gloomy strife. The shield of Starno fell, cleft in twain. He is bound to an oak. The early beam arose. It was then Fingal beheld the king. He rolled awhile his silent eyes. He thought of other days, when white-bosomed Agandecca moved like the music of songs. He loosed the thong from his hands. Son of Annir, he said, retire. Retire to Gormal of shells; a beam that was set returns. I remember thy white-bosomed daughter; dreadful king away! Go to thy troubled dwelling, cloudy foe of the lovely! Let the stranger shun thee, thou gloomy in the hall!

A tale of the times of old!

END OF VOLUME FIRST.







